

















# *C* OBSERVATIONS

MADE DURING A RESIDENCE IN BRUSSELS

AND SEVERAL TOURS THROUGH THE

NETHERLANDS,

COMPRISING

OSTEND, BRUGES, GHENT, ANTWERP, MALINES,

AND

BRUSSELS;

WITH REMARKS ON THE WORKS OF

NATURE AND ART ;

AND ENQUIRIES INTO THE PRESENT STATE OF

AGRICULTURE, POLITICAL ECONOMY, LITERATURE, THE  
ARTS, LAWS, GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION.

To which are added, from the most authentic information,

SEVERAL ORIGINAL ANECDOTES

RELATIVE TO THE

BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

And the humane conduct of the Inhabitants of the

CITY OF BRUSSELS,

ON THAT OCCASION.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

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SECOND EDITION.

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BY

HENRY SMITHERS,

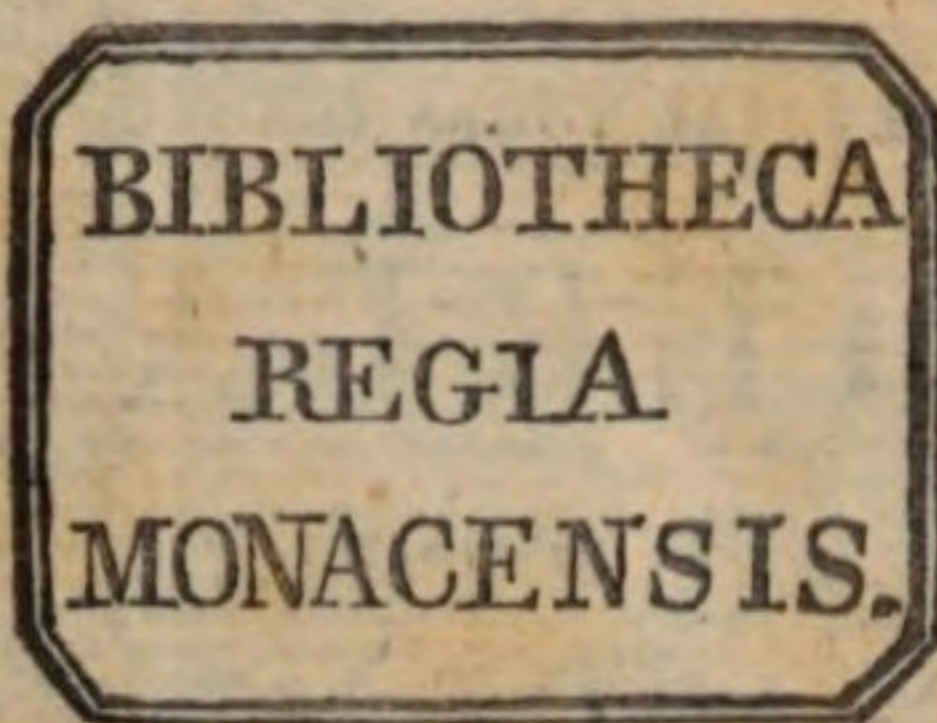
*Author of "Affection," a Poem ; etc. etc.*

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BRUSSELS :

Printed for the Author, at the British Press, No. 931, Rue Verte,  
near la Place Royale, and may be had of the principal Book-  
sellers in Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris, and Great Britain.







P R E F A C E

*TO HIS GRACE*  
**THE DUKE OF RICHMOND,**

*K. G. etc. etc. etc.*

**THIS WORK IS DEDICATED,**

**BY PERMISSION,**

**As a small tribute of grateful acknowledgment for his  
Patronage, and of sincere respect,**

*By his obedient, humble Servant,*

**THE AUTHOR.**



PREFACE

TO HIS GRACE

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By his obedient humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E.

SEVERAL of the Observations which appear in this Volume, composed parts of Letters written by the Author to his family in London; the difficulty of collecting so many facts in a foreign country will account for any trifling inaccuracies that may occur; he trusts that from material errors the Work is free.

The reflections which are occasionally interspersed, will be found uniformly favourable to Virtue and Christianity; a parent, who is convinced of the authenticity and high origin of the latter, would ill discharge his duty, if he neglected to avail himself of such an opportunity to impress upon the minds of his children its supreme importance; the objects that occur hourly in the Netherlands, bring the subject more immediately into notice: the Author views with admiration the complete toleration which prevails there, both in principle and in practice.

Feeling a most ardent attachment to his native land, which is fully justified by its pre-eminence among nations,



foreigners may think perhaps, when other countries are brought into comparison with it, that he betrays partiality; let them examine before they decide; the Author has endeavoured to hold the balance with an impartial hand.

It would argue ingratitude, were he to withhold those acknowledgments which are justly due to the highly respectable individuals who have furnished him with valuable information on several of the subjects noticed in this volume; next to the satisfaction of conferring benefits, is that of acknowledging them.

He has the more pleasure in discharging this debt, from the liberal manner in which the communications have been made: the original anecdotes relating to the battle of Waterloo, he feels confident will be justly appreciated, when it is known that the most material of them have been communicated by his Grace the Duke of Richmond, whose active mind, acknowledged bravery, and strong friendship towards the Duke of Wellington, urged him at the risque of his own life, to witness the triumphs of his friend, and the valor of his countrymen.

To A. Sayer, M. D. the Author is obliged for several of the prefatory observations on the new decimal system of weights and measures; and also, for the facts relating to the Charitable fund established in Brussels, of which he is the Treasurer.



To Mons. Van Hulthem, the principal Librarian of the Bibliotheque, he feels obligations for his readiness to afford information on every subject connected with that Institution.

To his highly valued friend, Mark Watt, esq. of Edinburgh, the Author is indebted for the original designs of the two Belgians. The female in "La faille de soie noir"—and the man in the winter cloak, styled, *Le Manteau*.

The frontispiece represents a Kermesse or village feast, such as continually occurs in the vicinities of all the towns and cities in the Netherlands; it is taken from an original sketch by Ostade, and is applicable to the present state of customs and manners as when first designed by his pencil.

The highly flattering encouragement which the first Edition of this Work has met with, from the respectable names who have patronized it, which are hereunto annexed, has stimulated the Author, by unremitting attention to the subject, to render the second Edition still more deserving of public attention; a long residence on the Continent, and opportunities of farther observation, has left him little to alter in the first Edition, as far as relates to the state of society and manners.



To those Van Hinder, the principal Librarian of the  
 Institution, the best acknowledgments for his readiness to af-  
 ford information on every subject connected with the in-

stitution.  
 To his highly valued friend, Mr. Wm. esp. of Edin-  
 burgh, the Author is indebted for the original designs of  
 the two Belgians. The former in 1713 made the ac-  
 count—and the man in the winter cloak, styled, the  
 Marston.

The frontispiece represents a Kentish or village scene,  
 such as continually occurs in the vicinities of all the towns  
 and cities in the Netherlands; it is taken from an original  
 sketch by Oude, and is applicable to the present state of  
 customs and manners as when first designed by the pencil.

The highly flattering encouragement which the first  
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 tinent, and opportunities of farther observation, has left  
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 state of society and manners. A few alterations, however, are  
 necessary, and



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**OBSERVATIONS,**  
**ON THE**  
**PRESENT STATE**  
**OF THE**  
**NETHERLANDS,**

*ETC. ETC. ETC.*

*In a Series of Letters.*

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**LETTER I.**

---

**OSTEND.**

WHEN I parted from you in England, I engaged to furnish you with such particulars of my intended Tour, as I should deem either amusing or instructive: I proceed therefore to redeem my promise. After a tedious, but safe voyage from London Bridge, I reached Ostend in four days, by the *Marquis of Anglesea* packet, a voyage which is often effected in a single day.



Various are the motives which induce travellers to forego the comforts of home, and endure privations, which in their own country they would consider most severe hardships; whilst a thirst for fame was, perhaps, the leading motive that induced Bruce to trace the Nile to its source, and urged Columbus to search out a new world, Christian principles impelled Howard to penetrate the abodes of wretchedness, and the haunts of misery; so intent was his mind on the accomplishment of the enterprize, that no inferior object could for a moment divert his attention, no obstacle subdue the ardour of his pursuit.

The traveller who presumes to publish to the world the result of his observations, should have carefully remarked whatever is novel or valuable, and describe the same with the strictest truth and perspicuity; above all, he should select the useful, and bring back to his own country whatever shall appear calculated to prove beneficial to it. The difficulties are great, for, to the mere traveller, the superficialities of society only, is, for the most part exhibited; residence, and even long residence, is necessary to examine into the true manners and genius of a people; a Tourist should so regulate his own mind, and so temper his own feelings, as to subdue national vanity and prejudice, penetrate the veils thrown over actions and events, view things as they are, not as they appear to be, and like the supreme magistrate seated on a throne of judgment, hold, with an unwavering hand, the scales of justice, and decide with discrimination and equity; however I may succeed, these are the great objects I shall keep in view in the observations with which I shall from time to time furnish you.

Ostend is one of the most valuable entrances of the



Netherlands; the possession of it has ever been considered of the greatest consequence, by the several Powers, who, in succession, have held the Sovereignty of the Low Countries; its maritime importance will fully appear by inspecting the map of Europe. The Harbour is difficult to enter, and somewhat hazardous; a flag-staff is elevated to guide vessels in their approaches to the port, and an excellent lookout is maintained, but notwithstanding these precautions, an accident occurred in 1816, to one of the packet-boats, without blame attaching to any of the persons concerned; On her being about to enter the harbour with a brisk wind, it suddenly abated, the vessel became unmanageable, and struck the bank: a considerable altercation took place on shore about rendering assistance; monsters in human form, dead to feeling, and blinded by cupidity and the hopes of plunder, contended against affording the necessary aid, expecting to partake of the spoils; but humanity prevailed, and the crew were saved; the cargo and the vessel were much damaged. Justice obliges me to observe, that on some of the coasts of our own country, similar atrocities are occasionally committed.

Ostend is situated in long 3. 1. E, from the meridian of Greenwich; and lat. 51. 15. N. or nearly the same latitude as London. It is twenty-four leagues N. E. from Calais, seventy-six N. E. from Paris, and twenty-eight and an half W. from Brussels. It is surrounded with bastions and other fortifications, and has four gates. In the year 814, it was a small village only, and belonged to the Abby of Bertin at St. Omers. It was made a town in 1072 by Robert de Frise, when the Church dedicated to St. Pierre was built. In the year 1372, the fishermen and other inhabitants surrounded it with pallisades merely. In 1445, Philip, surnamed the Good, encompassed it with walls, erected gates,



enlarged the town, and made the harbour more commodious, and in 1583, it was regularly fortified by the Prince of Orange, after he had taken Ghent and Bruges; the Prince of Parma attempted to attack it the same year, but was compelled to retire without effecting his purpose.

One of the most memorable events relative to this city was the celebrated siege which it sustained when attacked by the Spaniards, under the command of the Duke of Alva, from July 5, 1601, until September 20, 1604, when Ambrose Spinola succeeded against it, and nearly reduced it to ashes; the besieged are said to have lost 80,000, and the besiegers upwards of 50,000 men. Marshal d'Aumont, who endeavoured to take it by stratagem, in 1658, was himself taken prisoner, with the vessels which brought his army; several hundred men were killed and drowned in the attempt.

Upon the death of Charles the II. of Spain, the French seized Ostend. It was again besieged and taken by the Allies, during the wars of the Duke of Marlborough, in 1706. In this siege, the town house was destroyed, and in 1711 the present Hotel de Ville, which is a handsome structure, was erected: It was begun and finished within twelve months; the States General ceded it to the Emperor of Germany by the treaty of Utrecht, concluded in 1715. He established an East India Company, in 1722, which excited so much jealousy among the European Powers that he abandoned the project, and the Company was dissolved in consequence of the treaty in 1731. The French again became masters of Ostend, in 1745, but restored it after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748. In 1772, it was made a free port by the Emperor Joseph II. who considerably improved it, and in 1776 a basin, near 400 feet



broad, surrounded with store-houses, was opened for the reception of ships of considerable burden. During the progress of the French Revolution, the English, on 19 May, 1798, landed some troops, and destroyed the gates and Sluices communicating with the Bruges Canal, but the wind shifting before they could effect their re-embarkation, they were compelled to surrender prisoners of war. At the commencement of the French Revolution, in 1792, Ostend was taken by the Arms of the French Republic, but soon afterwards evacuated.

Whilst Ostend was in possession of the French, they repaired and extended the fortifications; the Fort on the west, began by them, has been recently finished under British Engineers; on the south side the fortifications have been strengthened, and new barracks are erecting, which will, eventually, render it a formidable place of defence. At the general peace of 1816, Ostend, with the whole of Flanders and Belgium was united to Holland. It offers little worthy of particular observation, excepting its fortifications, and the sluices which communicate with the Canal of Bruges. The breadth of its streets, its fine square, or market place, and the magnitude of many of its houses, (compared with those of the seaport towns in England) contrasted with the general inactivity, and silence that prevails here, exhibit a character of departed magnificence, which appears more conspicuous on farther progress into the Netherlands; the present population of Ostend is estimated to be about 10,000, exclusive of the neighbouring villages; it contains three Catholic churches of an inferior order. Although many protestant families reside here, no place of public worship has yet been assigned them; but the well known liberality which prevails on the subject of Religion in this country, among the Rulers, authorises me



to say, that on a proper application, some fit place would be appointed.

Ostend experiences great inconvenience from the want of fresh water, the requisite supplies of which, except what is obtained from rain, are brought from Bruges, and preserved in Reservoirs; to this cause may be ascribed the offensive smells, so prevalent here at all seasons. But it is well supplied with excellent fish, meat, game, fowls and vegetables, which are sold at moderate prices; if fresh water could be obtained in plenty, its contiguity to the British shores, would induce many English families to make it their residence. In the new town, founded by the Emperor Joseph, are some excellent houses, well furnished, and fitted up with a great degree of neatness; throughout the Netherlands, the numerous large Squares are used as markets for the sale of butter, cheese, vegetables and fruit; the vendors remain until about noon, and then remove with the whole of their stands or stalls and goods, and leave the Squares neat and clean.

A terrace walk which surrounds the fortifications on the west side of the city, affords fine views of the Sea, the breezes from which are deemed to possess considerable restorative powers here; a bathing machine is kept on the beach. The females are cleanly and healthy, but to a traveller they exhibit a most grotesque appearance; among the middling or lower classes, hats or bonnets are not worn, but large scarfs black or coloured, and most ponderous earrings suspended from each ear, and exceeded in size and weight only by those of the natives of Ava and Pegu in the east, where the holes in the ears are made when the female is young, and when increased to the size of a dollar, earrings are fitted thereto. The cumbersome wooden



shoes worn by the lower classes are novel exhibitions to an English eye, and striking contrasts to their large shewy ear-rings; they wear also long black cloaks much resembling those used at funerals in England.

It was judiciously remarked by an intelligent American, that when he first landed in England, the similarity of language, of habits, and manners to those of his own country, was such, that he forgot the distance which intervened; but when he crossed from the shores of Britain to Ostend, in a few hours only, he was struck with such an entire contrast in dress, food and costume as induced him to think he had been landed in some new world.

Ostend has nothing pre-eminent in art to boast of; near the portals of one of its churches is a frightful representation of the miseries of purgatory, the place is strewn with human bones, and eminently calculated to awaken sensations of horror; the principal church is spacious and the interior thereof exhibits some solid substantial pillars.

The traveller who flies from city to city, and from object to object without plan, and without reflection, may extend the circuit of his ideas, but not improve his taste or strengthen his judgment; this observation will be found peculiarly applicable in the Netherlands, crowded as they are with relics, altars, pictures and statues; an indiscriminate survey of the whole will tend only to confuse the memory, and injure a fine taste. The experienced connoisseur will judiciously make his selection, passing by every thing of an inferior description; to the inexperienced I recommend to visit the several works of art, whether in Architecture, in Painting or in Sculpture, progressively, commencing with those of inferior cha-



racter, and ascending regularly to the higher efforts of genius.

You will probably recollect that it was at Ostend, that many of the gun-boats for the invasion of Britain, during the last war, were constructed; the greater number of which remained there until their decay; it is a well known fact, that they were so injudiciously put together for the most part, that they would not have admitted of being fired off without sinking; one of them with five hundred conscripts on board, several of whom were of most respectable families, was sunk, owing to mismanagement, by a small vessel which ran aboard her. Ostend carries on a considerable traffic with England and the Continent.

Several fine pieces of cannon of considerable caliber are ranged upon the heights for the defence of the place; many of them were taken from the French, and still have their original names inscribed upon them; they are well worthy of inspection. The walks upon the ramparts and the terrace by the sea side, constitute one of the principal pleasures of a residence at Ostend; the view of the sea offers an unfailing source of beauty and sublimity.

The traveller who intends going to Bruges by the barge, will have to walk upwards of a mile to Sass, but a plan is in contemplation to continue the canal to Ostend.

I shall write next from Bruges.



## LETTER II.

## BRUGES.

THE Canals which intersect the Netherlands, afford the most valuable facilities to travellers at a moderate expense; early every morning the barge starts from Ostend for Bruges, and arrives in less than three hours; for such who wish to prosecute their journey to Ghent without delay, another Treckschuyt will be found ready, which arrives at Ghent the same evening: but Bruges will well repay the traveller who devotes a few days to inspect its public structures, and its environs. It possesses a navigable communication with Damme, Dunkirk, Furnes, Ghent, Nieuport, Ostend, Sluys, etc.

In the surrounding scenery may be evidently traced those models, which the Flemish painters selected for their fine Landscapes; and in the groupes of figures which are occasionally exhibited, you see whence Teniers, Brouwer and Ostade derived those ideas of character, which they have so faithfully delineated!—here are several fine specimens of trees, principally beech, planted in the manner of the ancient avenue, but their lateral branches being stripped during their growth, to a considerable height, the damps which are found to prevail in the avenues of England are here unknown: other causes indeed have contributed also to this, as the difference of soil and climate.

The present population of Bruges is about 33,632 persons—it once exceeded 200,000; from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century this city was the grand depot of Eu-



ropean commerce, and scarcely a nation but had its Consul and Factory established here; it was the emporium for wool, which its inhabitants manufactured into broad cloth; at that period, that manufacture being unknown in England, which exported all its wool and received cloth in return: the cloth-market is yet to be seen, and several extensive manufactories of serges, baize, dimities, camblets, and fine linens are carried on this city, and the articles sold at the market held every week under the arcades of the Hotel de Ville: the entrance to the city from Ostend, is through a fine avenue of trees extending a considerable distance; the houses are ancient, but well built, commodious and lofty; the city is about four miles in circumference and consists of many spacious streets, six principal market places or squares with numerous Churches and Chapels: Bruges was formerly a bishops see: the steeple of the Church of Notre Dame, serves as a land mark for vessels coming to Ostend, although about nine miles distant.

Such travellers as are desirous of seeing every object worthy of notice, I recommend to take an early opportunity after their arrival in each town or city, to ascend some Church, Town House or eminence, to gain a clear idea of the relative situations of the several structures market-places,, and public buildings; also, when it can be done, to walk round the town or city, on its ramparts or terraces. This plan I have experienced to be attended with numerous advantages, and greatly to save time; the ramparts round the City of Bruges, and the Hotel de Ville, offer great facilities for this purpose; from the latter, which is a fine specimen of Gothic Architecture, upwards of four hundred feet in height, a most commanding view of the city and of the surrounding country will be obtained, and amply repay the labour of ascending it. Here are two large bells,



one weighing 19,666 *lbs.* and the other 22,500 *lbs.* which were sounded to announce the Victory of Waterloo in 1815. They are rung nearly on the same principle as barrel organs are made to play. No city in Belgium can boast a more melodious set of bells than Bruges: I have listened to them for a long time with increasing pleasure.

The Church of *Notre Dame* is embellished with one of those fine specimens of pulpit architecture, for which the Netherlands have long been celebrated; it is designed in a rich and elegant taste, and executed with superior skill. In this Church is also a fine marble statue of the Virgin and Child, taken by Napoleon's command to Paris, and restored in 1816, when the Louvre was despoiled of its stolen trophies; it was probably No. 1116 of the Italian School in the Catalogue. Here are to be seen also, two splendid tombs or mausoleums one of Charles the Bold, who fell in battle, and the other of his daughter, the ancestor of Maria Louisa, the second wife of Napoleon. I have learnt from respectable authority that some of the materials of which these stones are composed, partake strongly of a magnetic power. The needle of a compass is materially affected by them. Napoleon, on visiting these sepulchres a few years ago, seeing these monuments were rapidly decaying, he ordered them to be repaired at a considerable expense, and caused them to be richly embellished with a stellated ceiling; they have cases thrown over them, which for a small fee are readily taken off; they well deserve inspection.

Had the career of victory which Napoleon had even then experienced allowed him time for reflection, he might have learnt from the fate of Charles the Bold, the uncertainty of power, and the caprice of fortune. He might have viewed



his own successes as meteors appointed to blaze, or astonish only for a time, and then to disappear. Had he confined his ambition to the real welfare of the country over which he reigned, he would have maintained himself on a pinnacle of unassailable greatness; in one of the side altars of this Church is an excellent modern painting of the martyrdom of St. Barbe, by her father, for having embraced the Christian Faith.—Here are also some good monuments in brass.

In the Musée at Bruges is shewn a picture by IOHES de Eyck; said to be the first ever painted in Oyl Colours *Inventor his Pictor*, 1420. It is in high preservation, and if indeed, the first, as stated, does great honour to the Artist; he practised in this City, and is known by the name of Van Eyck.

Another by the same hand bears date, Jan. 20, 1439. A portrait of his wife, the back well painted to imitate marble. It contains also two pictures by Emmelinck, Virgin and Child and St. Christopher, 1484; several by Rubens, etc. This collection is small but select.

In the ancient Convent of St. Jean, of the order of St. Augustin's, near the Church of Notre Dame, are two fine pictures of Holy Families, by Johanis Hemling, 1479, each in three compartments and possessing considerable merit, the largest was preserved from the French by a wall which was built before it; the Portraits are as highly finished as miniatures and exhibit striking characters.

A Convent still exists here, consisting of twenty-one Nuns who never marry, the Abbess is 75 years of age.



Bruges was sacked by the Gauntois in 1328, and in an early Campaign of the French Revolution was bombarded; one of the Churches and a Monastery were totally demolished. In the Church of St. Salvador are several good pictures, but none of a first rate class. The Baptism of John, and the Resurrection of CHRIST by Van Os, are among the best. In the Vestry is an excellent Portrait of a Priest by Odavaere, painter to the King of the Netherlands, from which an engraving is made in the new art of Lithography.--Upwards of Sixty British Families were residents in this city, in 1816.

Few of the numerous Monasteries and Nunneries with which the Netherlands once abounded, are now to be found; many of them were abolished by the Emperor Joseph II. and the French Revolution nearly completed their overthrow. A Convent of English Nuns has been permitted however, to re-assemble, which may be visited on particular days. I had a long conversation through the gratings with one of the Sisters, an intelligent female, of the Jerningham family, of Cortesy, four miles from Norwich in Suffolk, from whom I learnt the following particulars:--When the French invaded Belgium, the whole Sisterhood with great difficulty effected their escape in disguise--some in carts, or waggons--and fled to England, where they were dispersed among their different relations; the property belonging to the Convent being in the English funds, escaped confiscation. During their exile some of them were received at the Mansion of Sir Thomas Gage, Bart. at Hangrave in Suffolk, near St. Edmond's Bury: at that time Mrs. More, a descendant of Sir Thomas More, was the superior Abbess, who possessed a cross and a clock belonging to him. On the restoration of peace, they were permitted to re-unite in their Convent of St. Augustin,



their tutelar saint, and, what is remarkable, after eight years absence, and renewed intercourse with the world, they all, without exception, voluntarily returned to their Convent, under its ancient restrictions, some of which by the votaries of fashion will be deemed severe: they rise every morning, both in summer and winter, at half an hour after three o'clock, attend Matins at half past four, Vespers at three in the afternoon, and retire to bed at nine each evening, in separate apartments. The Convent consists of the Superior or Abbess, ten lay sisters, twenty-five Nuns; three were on approbation, for which one year and an half is allowed before the black veil is taken, which is irrevocable: Besides these, a number of young ladies are admitted for education, whom the sister-hood instruct during the day. On my second visit to Bruges; I attended their annual celebration on St. Augustin's day; the Church is small, but remarkably neat and clean. It has a splendid altar-piece, which was sent from Rome for James II. just previous to his abdication, and which was most tastefully decorated with artificial flowers. The service was performed in Latin, and a fine organ was played by some of the Nuns, who were appointed for that purpose, and separated from the audience by gratings; on the floor under them were the lay-sisters and domestics, and on an elevation the three noviciates engaged in acts of devotion. The whole scene was imposing, and inclined the spectator to invest the three candidates for the veil in greater beauty, than on a nearer view might have been realised;—one of them appeared peculiarly interesting.

It is painful to behold youth and loveliness immured in cloisters, in open violation of the commands of Heaven, and in opposition to the interests of society: In vain will it be urged, that they are self-dedicated to the glory of



GOD; those best promote his glory, who most contribute to increase human happiness, and the history of the world evinces, that the brightest charities of our nature, and the virtues which most ennoble the soul, flourish far better in society than in the abstraction of a Monastery, or in the cells of a Convent. I was informed by an English resident at Bruges, that a Convent of Recollett Nuns of a strict order, wearing a horse-hair dress, feeding on bread, water, and dried fish only, sleeping on short boards, with a back to keep them upright, and living in a state of the most austere mortification, had been recently abolished.

In the Church of Notre Dame is an excellent picture of the Lords Supper, the cloth finely painted. An installation was held here of the order of the Toison d'Or, or Golden Fleece; the stalls are most beautifully carved in wood with the arms of each Knight over his respective seat.

In the Church of St. Jacques are some tolerable specimens of the early School of painting, and also several curious ancient monuments; the principal altar-piece richly ornamented with marble.

In the Church of St. Anne, near the canal, the carvings of the confessionals are most admirably executed. Here is also a fine font.

And in St. Gele is a remarkable picture, representing a Priest who with a chain in each hand leads on a Negro, and a white man towards Heaven.

The Church of Jerusalem in this City is built after that of Sophia which still exists in Asia, although very small it has somewhat peculiar about it; by stooping you enter



a cave intended to represent the tomb of the Saviour, appropriately decorated; in the Church are some fine specimens of ancient stained glass. An old canal from Bruges to the Sluys, was commanded to be repaired by Napoleon; the Spanish prisoners were ordered to do the work, and the Citizens to find the money to pay them; it was carried about 6 miles passing through the fine village of Damme, on the way to l'Ecluse, where a venerable ancient ruin is to be seen; this canal is now to be completed.

Bruges has no ramparts, the walk round the City by the windmills is amusing, on arriving at the place where the canal enters the City, follow its course, a long distance as it winds through the City unto the *Basin*; once celebrated as a Depot of the Commerce of the World. Many of the boats to invade England were built here.

During the war between England and America, great activity was seen here; new and extensively large buildings as depots were built on the N. E. side by an eminent merchant, named Bertrand or Berterant, which are now empty.

Bruges maintained formerly a most extensive commercial intercourse with the Cities of Italy and with the East, by way of the Mediterranean. It was once the residence of the powerful Counts of Flanders, and the Court of Philip the Good, was the resort of the unfortunate from other countries; it was maintained with a splendour and magnificence unequalled by any other State. He established, in 1430, the order of the Golden Fleece, on the very day of his marriage with Isabella, daughter of John, King of Portugal.



Bruges is still celebrated for its linens, strong lace; checks, flax, hops, and a bell foundry.

My next Letter will give you some account of the celebrated city of Ghent.

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### LETTER III.

#### GHENT.

HOWEVER elevated the rank of the traveller, if he be desirous to observe human character, travelling by the barges offers a favourable opportunity so to do; for although the classes of Society are in some measure separated by different prices, the dress, the habits, and the manners of the natives may be well observed there.

The Ghent Barge as it is denominated, or that Treckschuyt which starts from Bruges to Ghent twice each day, is very similar to the city Barges of London; it is fitted up with every convenience; an excellent hot Flemish dinner is provided at a moderate rate; the dishes are very numerous, although but little in each; English travellers must not expect large pieces of roast beef and plumb pudding, but the viands are good, and the cookery is excellent.

The novelty of this mode of travelling pleases for a time; but unless enlivened by agreeable companions it becomes tedious. The horses which draw the Barges, never



exceed a slow trot, and there is a sameness in the scenery, which is wearisome. The Canal abounds with fine specimens of several species of water lilies.

Ghent, the capital of Flanders exhibits architectural grandeur, very far beyond its present political importance. The houses are built on a scale that surprises the stranger, but appropriated for the most part to purposes of commerce, being occupied as shops, manufactories or offices.

Ghent is built on the conflux of the Rivers, Lis, Lieve, Moeve and the Scheldt, besides which, several Canals surround it. It is founded upon twenty-six islands, and contains near three hundred bridges; from the low grounds which it occupies, it must be subject to great damps and severe cold in winter; nevertheless it is esteemed a very healthy city to reside in: it has two considerable canals, one communicating with Bruges, and the other circuitously with the Scheldt and Brussels.

In the year 789 the City of Ghent must have been a place of some importance; King Alfred having compelled the Danes to accept of a truce after they had ravaged England, they retired from thence to Flanders; attacked Ghent, and obtained there considerable booty.

It was enlarged in 1397, under Philip the Bold; on one of the Bridges is the figure in bronze of a young man, who was commanded to cut off the head of his father; when he was about to strike, the blade of the axe flew off leaving the haft in his hand, in consequence of which they were both pardoned; this is said to have happened in 1371.



Charles the 5th was born in this city, and a handsome statute was erected to his memory in the market place : alluding to the greater extent of Ghent or *Gand*, as it is in the French language, compared to Paris, he observed he could put all Paris in his “Gand,” or Glove. Until the French took possession of Ghent at the commencement of the Revolution, a singular custom is said to have been kept up here. The city having unsuccessfully revolted against Charles the V, he consented to pardon the inhabitants, on condition that they should appear before him with ropes around their necks, which he compelled them afterwards to wear in their ordinary occupations : being obliged to submit, they converted them into true lovers knots, which custom was not wholly abolished, when the French took possession of the city.

Had Napoleon continued much longer to reign, if the priesthood had not been abolished, its power would have been much weakened ; the Priests trembled at the very name of the military.

When he had imprisoned the Prince Broglio, Bishop of Ghent, he sent another from Paris, in his stead ; not having received the sanction of the Pope, the Priests refused to acknowledge him ; about two hundred and seventy of them were arrested by military force, and marched to the army, or to assist in the fortifications at Antwerp ; many of them perished at Leipsic. To shew, in some measure, the state of public feeling respecting them ; it is said, that they were hooted out of Ghent, and jeered as they passed along. History records, that Ghent formerly sent immense armies into the field ; its population within the walls by the latest returns, is 60,773 persons.

The inhabitants of Ghent, as well as those of all the



other cities of the Netherlands, entertain strong jealousy of the English; not long since a considerable quantity of British manufactures were seized at Ghent and burnt in the streets; without considering that by thus utterly consuming them, they rendered the British manufacturers essential service.

Ghent it must be allowed, equally with all other cities of the Continent, groans under the dreadful effects of a long protracted war: her manufacturers are continually dismissing numbers from employment, and the poor are consequently in a wretched state. But from the latest reports, commerce is reviving, and the population increasing greatly.

The city abounds in bleaching grounds; considerable quantities of linen are sent here from the manufacturing districts to be whitened for sale. It contains many objects worthy of notice. The botanic garden is planted with much taste, in it are many fine specimens of flowering and other hardy shrubs: it is open at certain hours every day for public inspection, free of expence, and is kept in good order. The mildness of the Autumnal season in the Low Countries admits Green-house plants to remain in the open air, nearly a month longer than would be safe in Great Britain. Botany is a favourite study among the inhabitants of this city; and the Netherlands afford a fine field for the pursuit; from thence Britain has received many of her choicest vegetables, flowers, and fruit.

There is at Ghent also an excellent free public Library, open every day, in which are found many ancient valuable works; in it is a reading-desk on a curious construction, very convenient for those who may find it necessary to



consult numerous books; it is a swinging cylinder with numerous shelves, which, as it turns round, brings forward any book that may have been previously placed on any of them, for perusal or for reference; a considerable increase has been recently made to this Library, that will probably render it necessary to remove the fine Basso Relievos which are seen here. It contains among other curiosities, a copy of the Bible printed in 1472, soon after the invention of the Art of Printing,

Divine worship, after the forms of the Church of England, is regularly performed every Sunday in the Church of the Capuchins, at half past eleven o'clock, and the Dutch and French Protestants have also their services here.

It was a remark made by the philanthropic Howard, that the prisons in the United Provinces were so quiet, and most of them so clean, that a visitor could hardly believe he was in goal. The prison at Ghent fully confirms this observation. On expressing a wish more minutely to inspect the domestic œconomy of it, the superintendant accompanied me through the several apartments: a remarkable neatness and cleanliness is observable throughout--every bed was made, and although humble in its materials, was clean and wholesome; the prisoners are all under strict regulations, and are constantly employed cleaning flax, weaving linen, and in other industrious employments; from which they are suffered to receive emolument towards their support. I advise every traveller to make this prison a particular object of his inspection, and investigation.

“It was my mother’s fault,” said a poor boy at Ghent, “that I was not taught to read!” a severe reproof on pa-



rental negligence. How many unhappy criminals might urge the same.

Several of the churches at Ghent will excite attention. The carvings are matchless. The wood carvings in the choir are executed in a most masterly manner. The pulpit in the Cathedral Church of St. Bavo, by Laurens Delvaux, in 1745, is richly inlaid with medallions of white warble : it is supported by a wooden carving of an aged man, to whom an angel, treading the globe beneath his feet, opens the book of life, exhibiting that passage—"Surge qui dormis et exurge a mortuis et illuminabit te Christus," ad Ephes, 5.--"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

In this church will be seen some very fine marble in Altars, Statues and Embellishments. That of Bishop Triest, by Quesnoy cannot fail to attract great admiration, both in the character, and in the lesser embellishments. The folds of the drapery, the hands, the profile, and the features, are executed in so masterly a manner, that the marble may be almost said to speak. It proclaims powerfully the merit of the artist, and may rank with the finest models of antique or modern sculpture. Here are also some specimens of Basso Relievo, by Van Ryschoot; amongst the pictures may be remarked the Resurrection of Lazarus, by Otto Van Veen; the death of Christ, by Vanhonthurst; the Paschal Lamb, by Van Eyck, 1415, the colours as vivid as if just painted, and possessing all the richness of the Venetian School. During the troubles of the 16th century, this church was with several others in the hands of the Protestants. A Sacramental Cup has been preserved from that period by a Protestant Society at Sas, and lately presented by them to the Protestant Church, now meeting in this city--it has a curious inscription in Flemish.



This chapel contained a pillar upon which was depicted, Oliver Mingan and Amelberge Hangen, his wife, who, during their marriage, had thirty-one children, among whom were several ecclesiastics.--Tradition states that when Charles V. made his public entry into this city, this good father accompanied by twenty-one sons, all in uniform, and under arms, came out with the other citizens, to meet the Emperor; as these brothers were distinguished from others as well by their resemblance as by their dress, the Emperor enquired who they were. On receiving the information, and that to this number of sons, two daughters were to be added, he ordered an annual pension to be paid to the parents.--It is remarkable, that soon after, in 1526, the whole of the sons died within a month of each other.

Under this church may be seen a Crypt which contains some very old specimens of sculpture and painting, and also several ancient monuments.

In the church of St. Michael, four large pictures are concealed by a curtain, which will be removed when desired. The Crucifixion by Vandyck, represents that hour when darkness was over all the land; it needs no encomium; Vandyck has attained a character, which can receive no exaltation from the eulogium of a traveller: the three modern pictures have also considerable merit; the one is the martyrdom of St. Helena, by Paelinck, the second the Ascension of the Virgin, by Francois of Brussels; and the third, is the Annunciation, by Lens, the group of cherub angels, is in a superior style of excellence, the dignity expressed in the countenance of the Virgin and the tone of colouring, all unite to render this picture deserving of marked attention. The architecture of this church is grand, the lofty tower having been struck by lightning



whilst building, it has never been finished; a model of what it was intended to have been, is shewn within the church.

The Minnikin Chapelle des Precaires contains one of the largest Roofs in Europe under one span. The Grand Beguinage near the Porte de Bruges, should not be omitted to be seen, it contains about 700 Beguins of all ages; but who receive no emolument, as they even pay rent for their residences.

The ramparts which environ the several cities of the Netherlands, possess powerful attractions, and greatly contribute to the comfort and health of the inhabitants; Ghent has much to boast of, in the rural inviting walks which surround it; the Coupure is the favourite resort for company.

The Castle at Ghent called Otho Castle is memorable, for having given birth to John O'Gaunt, who figures conspicuously in the early periods of English history, and in the plays of Shakespeare. This Castle was battered to pieces by the Spaniards in their attacks on the city; little of its ruins, even, are traceable, to mark out the place where once it stood. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was the fourth son of Edward III. of England; he died in 1399.

In various parts of this venerable city may be seen very fine ancient specimens of Moorish, Spanish and Gothic Architecture, of which drawings should be taken ere the destroying hand of time or the more sweeping one of modern taste, obliterates them for ever, at the Fauwn Brothers in Rue de la Pierre, some curious carved work remains.



Ghent has its subscription concerts, its theatre, its balls, public reading rooms, and other amusements; la Place d'Armes is much frequented when the military band plays there on summer evenings. At the house of Comte Schellings, called the Kings House, is a most beautiful specimen of inlaid flooring highly deserving of inspection and admiration. Baron Deschamps, has a most excellent collection of Pictures, which with the most praise worthy liberality he permits to be seen by travellers.

The church of St. Pierre, at the extremity of the city, is built on the model of one of the wings of St. Peters at Rome, and is about one-fifth part of the size thereof; the interior is fitted up in a chaste style of ornament, the pulpit plain but elegant; this was one of the few churches which escaped pillage during the Revolution; the massy plate was concealed and may be seen. In several of the other churches are pictures and marbles deserving inspection; the Hotel de Ville, a very high and spacious building, is also a remarkably fine exhibition of the ancient Gothic of the ninth century. Marriages are performed here; one side of it is a rich specimen of the antient Gothic, the other side has been modernised, to serve as a model of the several rates of building for the city. In one of the streets is placed the celebrated Canon called "La folle Marguerite." It is nearly eighteen feet in length and three in diameter.

Ghent has its academy of design, painting, sculpture and architecture; and a Cabinet of natural History erected 1751, under the auspices of Maria Theresa of Austria; every third year prizes are distributed. The public annual exhibition of modern arts is held alternately at Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp. It has also a Society of literature,



and of the fine arts, open to the artists of the whole kingdom; annual rewards, are distributed.

It has also an Agricultural and Botanical Society instituted, October 10, 1808. which corresponds with the British Agricultural Society of which Sir John Sinclair is President.

Expect my next letter from the celebrated city of Brussels.—Yours, etc.

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#### LETTER IV.

##### BRUSSELS.

THERE is no canal communication between this City and Ghent, except by the very circuitous way of Antwerp; diligences go regularly three times a day to and from Ghent and Brussels; but do not conceive that they resemble those conveyances formerly known by that name in England; the first view you have of them cannot fail to awaken risibility; they appear the most unwieldy machines you can imagine; they are constructed with the strength of a wagon, having rope harness, and carry a ton weight in the large basket behind, nevertheless, the inside is roomy and if not annoyed by the company, you will not have much reason to complain; the centre of the roads is paved with granite; for such is the natural lightness of the soil, that they would otherwise be impassable in wet weather and in winter. But however uncouth these conveyances may ap-



pear to the eye, and however tardy in their movements, they are very safe; accidents by them are rare.

The road to Brussels is through Alost, a considerable town, chosen by Smollet as the scene of some of his humorous exhibitions of character. Here is to be seen a fine painting by Rubens, lately brought from the Louvre, and restored to its former situation in this Church.

Brussels is situated in 50. 31. lat. and 4. 25. E. long. from Greenwich, about thirty miles South of Antwerp, and thirty-five miles S. E. of Ghent. It greatly resembles the city of Bristol as it stands partly on the summit of a lofty hill, and partly on low grounds; which gives an interesting diversity to its views, and a general air of cheerfulness to its appearance; it is surrounded by ramparts, which, by preventing the circulation of the air, makes the city sometimes very damp, nevertheless, they afford most agreeable promenades for the inhabitants, diversified with fine views of the surrounding country, and a commanding sight of the beautiful structures of the city. In walking round them, take the eastern side in the morning, and the western side in the afternoon, by which means the effects of the rays of the Sun, upon the numerous buildings give a favourable idea of its architectural beauties. Great alterations are now making in the ramparts, and handsome Boulevards are planned.

Authors differ greatly respecting the period when Brussels was founded, it had some houses and a castle about the year 900. It took its present name and rank as a city in the year 1040. It was surrounded with walls in 1044, some remains of which are yet to be seen. Its circumference is 2660 French paces; it was enlarged greatly from



1357 to 1370. Seven different Segnors had formerly their several castles therein, from whom sprung the seven Patrician families, from among which the magistrates were annually chosen. The number seven appears to have been anciently in high estimation in Brussels. It had also seven great Markets, and at that period only seven gates of entrance into the city.

It boasts that under the reign of Charles the Fifth, it had at one time seven crowned heads residing within its walls : --The Emperor; Philip his son, King of Naples; Maximilian, King of Bohemia; the Queen of Hungary; the Governante of the Low Countries; the Duke of Savoy, King of Cyprus; the Duchess of Lorraine, Queen of Jerusalem, and Muley Hasen, King of Tunis in Africa. The sovereigns of this city, were anciently named Counts, but afterwards Dukes of Brabant. On the ground which is now denominated La Place Royale, stood a magnificent palace, which was began to be built in 1300 by John II. Duke of Brabant, and finished by Philip the Good. On the 4th February 1731, a fire broke out at midnight, and burnt with such violence, that in about four hours the whole palace was consumed. The Princess Maria Elizabeth, Arch-Duchess of Austria, who was greatly beloved, was saved almost by miracle : she escaped with only one stocking on, and in her night dress : the room fell in immediately after she had quitted it, and one of her maids of honour, the young Countess of Ullefold, perished in the flames. In the year 1311 the order of Knights Templars was abolished in Brussels and in 1444 a grand tournament was held there, in which two hundred and twenty-five Chevaliers engaged.



Brussels has eight barriers, or gates of entrance, which are shut every night; and in time of war strongly guarded; for no person is then permitted to pass without a proper passport. To an English traveller these precautions which are general, and perhaps necessary on the Continent give trouble to which he has not been accustomed, and at which his mind revolts. The population of Brussels is estimated at about 80,000. The Fiacres, or Hackney Coaches, for comfort and neatness, are superior to those in London, the fares nearly the same; they are under excellent regulations.

Of all the populous cities of the Netherlands, Brussels will be found to possess the most powerful attractions; it has been long the residence of the Court, and of the principal nobility; its central situation, its elevation, its public walks and rides, its excellent markets, the magnificence of its buildings, and the general health of its inhabitants, are eminent advantages. The Park is laid out in the formal style of the last century, without the tasteful improvements and irregularity of modern landscape gardening, as practised in Britain; but the most partial admirer of that system, would not wish an alteration here, for it will be desirable ever to retain some specimens of the antient manner, to contrast with the modern, and mark the progress of taste. In the Spring season the promenades are charming, and the notes of the blackbirds, the fauvette, or black headed chaffinch, greatly resembling those of the thrush, at an early hour in the morning, and of the nightingales in the evening, add greatly to its attractions. Pheasants are unknown in this country and the melodious notes of the wood-lark are never heard. Between the hours of three and five in the afternoon, the promenade called "La Belle Allée," is crowded by the English; and in the evenings and more or less



by the Belgians the whole of the day. Why the worst side of the Park, is selected for the fashionable resort is perhaps difficult to say, fashion is not often reconcilable to good sense; the upper side of the Park has every thing to make it more desirable. In a deep dell on the south side, is a spring of water, on the stone margin which surrounds it, is inscribed:—

“ Petrus Alexowits, Czar magnus Muscoviæ, insidens margini hujus fontis, aquam illius nobilitavit libato vino hora post meridiem tertia die Aprilis, Anno 1717.” Thus translated:—

“ Peter Alexander, the great Czar of Muscovy, sitting on the margin of this fountain, ennobled it by drinking wine here, in the afternoon of the 3d April 1717.”

The park is decorated with numerous busts and statues in marble; some few of which merit notice. A Magdalen, by Quesnoy, reclining upon stones, supporting her hand in the act of reading, has received great injury by time, and from the drippings of the trees which surround it. Near the residence of the Prince, on the borders of the lawn, are statues of Diana, of Narcissus by Gripenlo, and Venus with her doves by Ollivier of Marseilles, 1774, and others.

On the visit of the Emperors to Brussels after the battle of Waterloo this Park was wholly and most splendidly illuminated; lamps of various colours were disposed tastefully among the trees and produced a most magical effect, resembling the enchantments described in the Arabian Night's Entertainments.

The park is opened early every morning, and continues



so till late every evening, excepting on wet days. To enjoy its richest beauties it is desirable to be there at sun-rise, the sweet singing of the birds, that unbought aviary of Heaven, and the health that will be enhaled, will indeed, amply repay whatever sacrifices it may require. Some may prefer the nightly solace of the melancholy nightingale, Milton's favourite songstress.

There is something in the park of Brussels to excite an increasing admiration and delight, I have met with several persons who have united in the same remark, for its limited extent it abounds with diversified beauties. There is a small theatre in the park, but not used as such, and another in Place de Monnaie of which it is boasted that it is the only one in Europe which has never sustained any accident by fire. A very spacious new one is expected to open near the other, about the beginning of the year 1819.

The soil of Brussels and its environs is sandy, the heaviest rains are quickly absorbed, and the walking is pleasant: this is observable even in the streets, which have no pavement for foot passengers; the whole way is laid with granite stones, and is very disagreeable and truly fatiguing.

Between the gates of Namur, and of Halle, without the walls, are lofty sand hills, in which large pieces of coral, flints, sea shells, and other fossil remains of an antediluvian world are found. In the Botanic Garden, near the Place Royale are some most remarkably fine Orange-trees; the blossoms are annually taken off and sold, the reason alledged is, that it promotes the growth of the trees. This Institution was formed in 1798 upon a declivity of an an-



cient rampart; and contains several rare and curious plants, grasses, etc. It is open to the public every morning from 8 to 12, and every afternoon from 2 to 6 (holidays excepted) many of the plants are labelled with their names, classes and orders according to the sexual system of Linnæus. On the north side of the Botanic Garden on the ground floor, a suite of rooms anciently belonging to the Palace, is appropriated for a collection of Natural History from the establishment of the Central Schools and of the University of Louvain with a collection of instruments machines, etc. which is receiving daily new acquisitions; it being intended to collect specimens of all the natural productions of the Kingdom. To which is added a collection of Mathematical and Mechanical Instruments; both these Institutions are now under the superintendence of Monsieur Delkin, Professor; public lectures are read here free of expense.

The city is amply supplied with water which is laid on to the principal houses; and for general benefit there are upwards of twenty fountains, some of ancient date which contribute greatly both to health and cleanliness; some of which are of a most indelicate and indecent description. A very handsome one is erected in the Grand Sablon, by order of Thomas Bruce, Earl of Aylesbury, who after having dwelt 40 years in this city, left a sum of money to erect this fountain, in testimony of the health he enjoyed here during that period of time. It was placed here in 1751, and erected by James Berge, a Sculptor of Brussels, in marble, the group represents Minerva, holding the portraits in Alto Relievo of the Emperor of Austria and his Empress, at the feet of the goddess, is a boy, emblematical of the Scheldt, and another holds her spear. On the pedestal is carved the Family Arms with the ancient motto



“Fuimus.”—a Latin Inscription occupies two of the sides composed by Roderigo de Cologne, the intimate friend of his Royal Highness Charles Duke of Lorraine, the Governor General.

I accompanied in 1817 the present Earl of Ailesbury and his son Lord Bruce to this spot, who, with that respect for their ancestor which honours human character, gave directions that this monument, valuable as an historical record should be thoroughly repaired, which has been since done by M. Godecharle, the most eminent Sculptor of this city, whose works are well worthy of the observation and inspection of travellers of fine taste.

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## LETTER V.

### BRUSSELS.

It is a remark which I have reason to think an appearance to experience will confirm, that the general style of the Architecture of a country partakes of the character of its inhabitants; except, where foreign taste, or temporary fashions have been introduced: in the moveable tents of the Arabs may be traced their erratic lives; in the lightness of the Chinese and Eastern buildings, is perceptible the character of the people, which their climate and Government have so greatly contributed to form; in the Egyptian masses, we behold that attempt at duration, which induced the Egyptians to embalm their dead, and erect pyramids which have



endured to this day; and in the Grecian temples is observable that elegant taste, which constituted them the models of modern architecture; thus, in the Churches of the Netherlands is apparent that gloom, that heaviness which superstition and bigotry has so long and so successfully operated to produce.

The style is a mixture of the Gothic and Moorish architecture, introduced during the period when the low countries were under the Spanish yoke. It pleases, principally by its outlines, and the rich tints, with which time has embellished it.

The Church of St. Gery, of which the ruins only remain, in the lower part of the City, is the most ancient. It is said to have been built in the year 948.

I cannot avoid noticing with the highest approbation, the liberal system which prevails, as well in the Netherlands as in France, of throwing open all the noble structures and institutions of art and science to public inspection, free of expense; the remark may, indeed, be considered, as an oblique reflection on Britain. I entertain a hope, however, that she will one day follow the example, which she has already commenced, at the British Museum.

The Cathedral Church of St. Gudule, is built in a grand style of Gothic Architecture, it was commenced about 1010, its founder is unknown; it is ascertained, that in 1047, it was ornamented and extended by Lambert Balderic, Counte of Louvain, and endowed with revenues to maintain twelve Canons, which number was afterwards increased. About the centre of the aisle is the celebrated



pulpit carved in oak by Henry Verbrugger, of Antwerp, in 1699, which formerly belonged to the Jesuits at Louvain. It represents Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise by an Angel, and death appearing to them; the globe of the earth forms the concavity of the Pulpit, which rests on a tree. On the top, is the Virgin and the Infant Jesus, the Virgin bruising with the Cross the head of the serpent; the whole forms another fine specimen of perfection in this art. There are also fourteen statues carved in stone, upwards of ten feet in height, representing Jesus Christ, the Virgin, and the Twelve Apostles, Matthew, Thomas, and Bartholomew, by Quesnoy. In the side aisles are sixteen chapels, ornamented with pictures, descriptive of the history of the sixteen sacred hosts, said to have been stolen and stabbed by the Jews; the tradition respecting which, I shall give you hereafter. In a smaller room in the church, usually locked, are the baptismal fonts, “ which were formerly outside of the churches, as they  
 “ still are at Rome, Florence, Pisa, and some other  
 “ places. Their shape was anciently, that of a Bath,  
 “ wherein those admitted to baptism, were entirely  
 “ plunged. Some of the learned believe, that during the  
 “ first three centuries, no particular place was set apart for  
 “ baptism. Mabillon speaking of the baptismal fonts of  
 “ Verona, asserts, that they were constructed of stone,  
 “ and were twenty-six feet in circumference.”

Several Installations of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, have been held in this Cathedral; in 1435, in 1501, and in 1516.

The beautiful historic stained glass of the windows claims attention; the colouring is brilliant, the light and shade richly contrasted, and the whole in tolerable preser-



vation, although in some places injured. It represents the Emperor Charles V. and Isabella his Empress. The Emperor Ferdinand and Anna Lonisa, his Empress. Francis I. of France and Eleanor, his Queen, sister of Charles the V. Queen Mary, widow of Louis, King of Hungary. John, King of Portugal, and Catherine, his Queen, sister of Charles the V. Philip archduke of Austria, son of Charles the V. and his Queen. Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand and his Queen, the daughter of Charles the V. The whole after the designs of the celebrated Rogiers and Diepenbeeck.

The altar of the choir, composed principally of white marble, was erected in 1743. The interior of this church contains monuments of John II. Duke of Brabant, in 1313, and Margaret his wife, daughter to Edward, King of England, the lion over this tomb, which is made of copper gilt, it is asserted, weighs 5000 pounds or thereabouts; here is, also, the Mausoleum of Archduke Ernest, clad in armour, he died, in 1595; on this monument is inscribed.

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

At the annual celebration of the Sacrement *des Miracles*, in July, six splendid pieces of tapestry are exhibited, which are held in high estimation; and which were some of the last productions of the Brussels manufactory. They are in high preservation, the colours very brilliant; they were sent to Paris, but are now restored. During the dominion of Napoleon, a telegraph was erected on the Tower of this Church. The view of the City from this Tower, is very pleasing. The architecture of this Church



is striking, more particularly as the shades of evening are advancing; but the fine effect of the Gothic is much injured, by the miserable whitewashed dwellings with which the building is surrounded, in violation of every sentiment or feeling of correct taste.

The principal entrance door of the church of the Sablon, exhibits another beautiful example of Gothic Architecture, the whole structure is of an enriched order. This church was built in 1288, by John I. Duke of Brabant, in commemoration of a great victory, by which the Duchy of Limbourg was reunited to Brabant. The principal aisle is embellished by Statues of the twelve Apostles, which appear to have been a favourite ornament, by being placed in many of the churches. They are fixed, generally, over the pillars in the principal aisle; would they not be more advantageously placed on the pedestal of the pillars? By placing them on the Capitals they injure greatly the perspective; in this Church, is a Statue in marble of Joseph and the Infant Jesus—and another of St. Ursula, by Quesnoy. Also, some tolerable paintings by Crayer, of the Fathers of the Church, worshipping the Virgin; and its companion, the Death of the Virgin.

In the side chapels are several pictures of the early School of Painting, in the style of Albert Durer, in good preservation; the colours remarkably vivid. In the first chapel on the left, on entering at the principal door, are three modern Paintings, by Verschoot, illustrative of the history of Ste. Barbe; and on one of the pillars a small painting possessing great merit, a Madona and Child, in the style of Corregio.

In an enclosed chapel in this Church, is the celebrated



monument to the memory of the Princess La Tour Tassis, in black and white marble, surrounded by cenotaphs, and relics of the eleven thousand Virgins, famous in the Roman Catholic Legends. In one of the side chapels, is a curious alabaster altar-piece. Several of the pictures from this Church have been recently removed.

To report on the various Religious orders which formerly existed when the Roman Catholic religion was in its splendour, would far exceed my limits, but the society of Beguin Nuns, requires particular notice. The most authenticated document respecting them is one dated 1605, said to be found in the archives of the Beguinage at Vilvorde; this charter mentions two hogsheads of rye, given by them in perpetuity, to be distributed to the poor, at the feast of Christmas: This order is composed of free women, who, without living in societies, devote themselves to devotion, and to occasional acts of benevolence. They wear habits of a religious order, and sometimes travel the country to attend the sick; in 1743, Belgium contained upwards of 10,000. The Revolutions have dispersed them greatly, but several Beguinages are yet to be seen, and some of the Sisterhood are to be found in most of the principal Cities of the Netherlands.

In the lower part of Brussels, was formerly, a very numerous Society of Beguins; the buildings still remain, and present a very singular appearance; they are divided into narrow streets, other streets running from them, at right angles; they were formerly insulated and surrounded by a fosse, with gates. Upwards of eight hundred resided within its walls, who were governed by matrons, under the Bishop of Antwerp, and seven hundred young females were then educated there. Since the French Revolution most of the houses



are inhabited by others : some few Beguin Nuns, their number at present does not exceed three hundred, may be seen here. As an object of curiosity, the Beguinage is deserving a morning's ramble for examination ; the Nuns attend Matins at the Church of St. John adjoining, a gothic structure, built after the design of Wenceslaus Coeberge ; the effect of a beautiful carved pulpit is injured by the ochreous colouring with which it is covered. The carving is excellent, and the design bold, the general architecture of the Church partakes of the same characteristic, There is also a fine Organ and Organ gallery. This structure was began in 1657, and named after its founder, Stephena Beggha, daughter of Philip, of Landen. The Beguin Nuns take merely a vow of chastity ; they can quit the Society, and marry ; their time is entirely at their own disposal.

The Church in the Rue de l'Hopital, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, has been recently pulled down ; in some of the subterranean vaults have been discovered vestiges of the dreadful effects of the Inquisition. Near here a large Cotton Manufactory has been recently converted into the Palais de Justice. The building on the North side of the Park, heretofore used for that purpose, is appropriated for the Sitting of the Chamber of the States-General.

In the Church of St. Finnesterre, built in 1720, in the Rue Neuve, another pulpit of curious workmanship may be seen, and a good modern picture of Philip Neri, the Institutor of the Order of Les Oratoires, worshipping the Virgin. In the vestry also, is a tolerable painting of the fifteenth century.

In the Church of Notre Dame de la Chapelle, over the



principal Altar-piece, is an indifferent copy after a fine picture of Rubens; and between that Altar and the one on the left is an original picture of Janseens, of the Martyrdom of St. Lawrence; in the left hand Altar, are several landscapes of Asselyn and of Artois; there are six chapels on each side of the principal aisle, in one of which are two whole length portaits of St. Xavier and St. Ignatius. In this Church are several ancient monuments, and an annual representation takes place here on the Eve of every Good Friday, of the entombing of CHRIST, with much ceremony.

The Church of St. Caudenberg, in La Place Royale, was erected in 1774, and composed part of the plan for the improvements which then took place in the park. The facade is elegant. Statues of Moses and David, are placed on the sides of the Portico; and the Alto-Relievo over it, represents the Martyrdom of James. The interior also displays much grandeur of design; it admits considerably more light than the ancient structures, and has few ornaments or decorations. Two marble Statues, the one of St. Peter, and the other of a female Saint, probably St. Anne, deserve notice. This Church is found too small on the Sunday, to contain the persons who attend it, it is constantly crowded.

His present Majesty was inaugurated September 21, 1815, King of the Netherlands; the ceremony took place in La Place Royale, in front of this Church nearly, amidst thousands of spectators; an elevated platform had been erected, which was splendidly ornamented. There, in the midst of his people, and surrounded by his nobles, he swore to maintain their rights and privileges inviolate, and to support the Constitution as by law established; re-



ceiving in return oaths of fidelity from the Magistrates, and those in authority. Medals in gold, silver and copper, which had been struck off for the occasion, were distributed among the populace, to commemorate the event. The inauguration of the Chief Magistrate, or “La Joyeuse Entrée” has ever been considered a Jubilee day by the people of these countries.

The length of this letter will be a sufficient apology for its conclusion.

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## LETTER VI.

### BRUSSELS.

THE Hotel de Ville, in the Grand Place, is a remarkable fine specimen of a light and elegant style of Gothic Architecture. It was commenced in 1400, and was forty years completing. The tower is 264 feet in height, and in 1445, a statue of St. Michael, the tutelar Saint of Brussels, in copper, 17 feet high, was added, and is visible from all parts of the City; he is represented in the act of striking the dragon; it serves as a weathercock; the edifice is built of hard blue stone; and upwards of one hundred niches were left for statues: many of its fine antique embellishments are destroyed, in the commotions and convulsions these countries have undergone. A circular stair case of 447 steps runs up the Steeple: it may be ascended with safety to its full height. Large birds of prey frequently lodge and devour their victims here; proofs of this are apparent in the feathers and the offal remains: a most commanding view of the whole City is obtained from hence. The interior abounds with



some beautiful specimens of ancient tapestry; principally historical; three after Janseens; the history of Clovis, Inauguration of Philip the Good, and the resignation of Charles V. in favour of his Son Philip. This building will be viewed with some degree of interest as the spot where the last extraordinary circumstance took place; Charles V. the child of superstition, the tool of papal power, galled with the weight of Empire and thwarted in his vast plans of ambition, here resigned that Crown which he could wear no longer with satisfaction or pleasure. Regal power has, generally, been found to possess charms too strong to be voluntarily resigned; but Brussels has witnessed two exceptions to this remark. Christiana of Sweden, voluntarily abjured her crown here, in 1754.

Here the second Chamber of the States-General, hold their sittings: it is elegantly fitted up with benches, chairs of State, etc. Tickets of admission to the gallery, to hear the deliberations, may be obtained.

Opposite the Hotel de Ville, is a remarkable structure, called La Maison du Roi, built in 1618, by order of the Archduke Albert and Her Serene Highness the Infanta Isabella, who, considering that "Notre Dame de Wavre" had "not only delivered the city from the plague, but had, also, vouchsafed the blessings of peace, erected on this mansion an image of the virgin, and placed in the front an inscription which yet remains. *A Pesta, fame, et Bello libera nos Maria Pacis: hic votum pacis publicæ, Elizabeth consecravit.*" This building was sold by government to the Count Arconnati, the upper part is now occupied as a School, and the lower part as shops.

Maria Theresa of Austria, issued an edict in 1773. in fa-



vour of painting, sculpture, engraving and architecture, declaring that the Arts should not derogate from nobility, and that every one might be at liberty to exercise them freely, and vend their performances.

In 1774, commenced the great improvements in La Place Royale, which went on rapidly; and on the 12th. Feb. 1776, Charles Duke of Lorraine, laid with great ceremony the first stone of the new Church of the Abbey of Caudenberg, which was followed by the buildings in La Place Royale, and the embellishments of the Park as they are now seen.

Among other privileges which the Dukes of Brabant have granted to this City, children born in it, or in its Faubourgs, whose mothers are free are, entitled to their freedom although their fathers be strangers, or foreigners.

In the Rue de Namur are the stables belonging to the ancient Chateau, now occupied by the horses of the Prince of Orange and Prince Frederick, capable of containing nearly two hundred; they are open for inspection.

Beneath several of the houses which surround the Park, are extensive subterraneous communications extending to great distances under it. The range of buildings which surround it are constructed in a bold style of Grecian architecture. “*Le tout ensemble*” forms one of the most powerful attractions to this City, and must ever be considered as a most successful exhibition of fine taste. Few cities can boast of two streets to vie with Rue Ducale and Rue Royale, on the east and west sides of the Park. The palace of the King and the Government offices are on the south side, and on the north side the residence of the Prince of Orange,



and the House of Parliament of the States General, the facade of which has been deservedly commended. The Alto Relievo represents Justice rewarding Virtue and punishing Vice. In the centre of La Place Royale stood a fine statue in bronze, of Charles Prince of Lorraine which was thrown down when the French, under Dumourier, took possession of Brussels, in 1794; it was replaced by the Austrians on their regaining possession of the City, and a second time overthrown when the French reconquered Belgium.

The following is a statistical return for the City of Brussels, for the year 1817 : in the whole year there had been 512 marriages, 2 divorces, 2987 births and 2918 deaths. The returns from Amsterdam state, that during the same period there had been 7040 births, 8416 deaths, the deaths exceeding the births 1376; which exhibits a striking contrast between the two Cities in favour of Brussels.

The monasteries and convents with which the Netherlands once abounded are nearly abolished. Brussels in 1785, contained 13 monasteries, 20 convents, 2 beguinages, 26 abbeys and 60 hospitals, 28 churches and chapels, 20 bridges, 3 prisons, 10 quays, 4 basins, 13 marketplaces, 25 public fountains and about twelve hundred houses. It still contains 3 convents for females, but visitors are not admitted. And there are several excellent hospitals as well military as civil, for aged men and women, and an establishment founded in 1568, for "Les Enfants trouvés." Those who are brought up therein, are patronised by the inhabitants of the city, treated with indulgence, and favoured through life. Females are kept there too long before they are placed out in the world.

This letter concludes the observations on the several ob-



jects most worthy of notice within the walls of the City; in my next the suburbs will claim your attention.

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## LETTER VII.

### BRUSSELS.

The prospect from the bridge, at the head of the Canal, near the Porte du rivage, offers some striking contrasts of scenery. On the one hand is the Canal filled with trading vessels; its wharfs exhibiting those busy scenes which are the usual accompaniments of commerce; on the other hand l'Allée Verte on the banks of the Canal, lined with numerous rows of trees, resembles a walk through a Park, forming a magnificent double avenue; occasionally the sight of a distant Villa affords that variety which even the most beautiful scenery requires, to continue to please.

In the Spring or summer season, this is the fashionable evening resort, both for carriages and as a promenade, parading up and down as in Hyde Park.

On a Summer's evening, in June 1818, in the air, between the lofty tops of the trees which form this avenue, were seen myriads of insects in long continuous lines, like armies led on in line by some leader; they extended (with occasional breaks only) the whole extent of the Allée Verte upwards of a mile in length. In 1695 the French Army under Marshal Villeroy, came to the environs of Brussels to force the Allies to raise the Siege of Namur. They began on the 13 of August at five in the afternoon to bombard the Town



and continued the fire for 48 hours with such fury as to reduce to ruins 14 fine churches and upwards of 4,000 houses, besides greatly damaging the Hotel de Ville and many other public buildings. In less than four years afterwards, the whole were rebuilt.

The French Army, in 1746, under Marshal Saxe, again besieged Brussels; the Magistrates sent out a deputation, to request him to spare the Allée Verte, although much irritated at the resistance made to him, he complied with the request. After heavy rains this walk cannot be taken : situated on the banks of the Canal, in the lowest part of the City, and overshadowed with trees, it will be found disagreeably damp and dirty.

Ascending the ramparts eastward from the Bridge towards the Porte of Laeken, crossing the River Senne, a commanding view of the City is obtained. A long range of building on the left, now in a ruinous state, and recently commenced to be pulled down, was formerly an hospital for the sick, inscribed "La Maison des Pestifères," 1618. On the right are the bleaching grounds, and the Cathedral of St. Gudule in majestic grandeur, towering above all the other structures. His Grace the Duke of Richmond inhabited a house on the right, with gardens and outhouses, during his stay in this City, which he quitted on being appointed Governor in Chief of Canada.

Pursuing this walk, passing the Gates of Scarrebeck and Louvain, you approach that part of the ramparts, which commands the Park. Here is a building erected to supply the City with water, the principle on which it acts may be seen by the model in the Repository of natural History, under the Musée; with other ingenious Mathema-



tical and Mechanical Instruments. Continuing the walk, passing the Gate of Namur, the new prison is seen, which Napoleon had destined for British prisoners; it is yet unfinished, but in progress towards completion. Adjoining this is the mansion of the Duke d'Arenberg, a spacious residence with a handsome court yard. The Duke has been blind many years from an accident on a shooting party. A view of the gardens is obtained from the ramparts. On the left the Palace of Laeken and the road to Waterloo are visible. Approaching the Gate of Halle, the view becomes in a high degree pleasing, between the Gate of Louvain and the Gate of Scarrebeck the whole of the City is seen with great distinctness. Beyond the Gate of Anderlecht the spire of the Town-Hall is viewed to the best advantage; it has here a light and airy appearance not visible elsewhere. The French Army entered Brussels Nov. 14, 1792, under the command of Dumourier, soon after the Battle of Gemappe and quitted it again March 23, 1793 after the Battle of Louvain.

At the foot of the hill on which is erected the Palace of Laeken, is an English garden, laid out with some taste, but rather too minute in its divisions, and not sufficiently bold in its walks, but nevertheless, producing a charming effect.

The Royal Chateau of Schoenberg, or Palace of Laeken, has witnessed some of those vicissitudes to which all terrestrial objects are liable. It was erected by Maria Christiana, of Brabant, in 1782. When the French Army invaded Belgium, they purposed to convert it into an hospital, "because," said the Revolutionists, "it is full time that the golden wainscots which have served to embellish the residences of tyrants, should now be rendered useful;" but the return of the Austrians put a stop to their plans.



After the peace of Luneville, the estate was sold to individuals, who have destroyed the beautiful Chinese Temple, erected between the Chateau and the River, and were on the point of demolishing the Palace, when Napoleon purchased it, and presented it to the Empress Josephine; who during her visits here rendered herself much beloved by her affability and benevolence. In her walks she visited the poor cottagers and relieved them. This casts a brighter lustre around Rank and Royalty than the Crowns they wear. It is now the Summer residence of the King of the Netherlands. It is built in a modern style of Architecture, was newly furnished from Paris, with much taste, by Napoleon's directions, and is situated in a small park, which possesses very great capabilities. It is laid out somewhat in the English manner, but admits of very great improvements. In the grounds are found several fine specimens of the single yellow rose; the peony, the virginian allspice, the tulip tree, etc. The beautiful eastern Pagoda in the grounds, which was sold and taken away when the French took possession of the Property, report says, is about to be re-erected. In the Church of Laeken, is an image of the Virgin, held in high estimation; said to be eight hundred years of age.

The entrance hall of the palace is spacious, and neat: it contains a figure of Victory covering the globe, inscribed "*l'Empire Francois est l'Amour.*" Some fine historical and mythological specimens of Gobelin tapestry ornament the several apartments. The principal floor is divided into a suite of rooms, consisting of nineteen in number; the floors are beautifully inlaid. The furniture consists chiefly of crimson, green and purple velvets, with gold fringes. The circular concert room in the centre, contains some fine Basso Relievo's, supported by twelve lofty corinthian pillars; the floor of marble, inlaid. Few rooms in Europe will be



found to excel this, for its architecture and the richness and chasteness of its ornaments.

A ship executed in Brussels Lace, most ingeniously, is sometimes shewn here. On ascending outside the Dome, a most extensive and richly diversified prospect is seen, comprising the City of Brussels, the road to Waterloo, to Antwerp, and the surrounding Champaign country.

The immense Forest of Ardennes, once spread over the greatest part of Belgium, extending itself into Holland, to the borders of the Rhine and Westward to Tournay; the Forest of Soignes, and even the Park of Brussels, composed part of it. It is related that in the thirteenth century, a thousand persons consecrated themselves to GOD in its solitudes; at the begining of the sixteenth century there were about 600; it is a Royal domain, part of the wood is cut down every year, which supplies fire wood for Brussels, the poor being permitted to gather the chips. The Princes often used to take the diversion of hunting here, it abounds with game, and formerly with Herons; it is about 8,000 toises in length, and 6,500 in breadth, but it tends to render Brussels humid, by attracting the clouds that approach within its influence. The Wood of Soignes, or Forest of Ardennes is immortalized by Shakespeare in "*As you like it.*"

In this Wood is the Chateau Tervuren, built by St. Hubert, who became Bishop of St. Liege, at the commencement of the eighth Century : the ancient Castle was demolished in 1782 and 1783. A new Palace is now building for H. R. H. the Prince of Orange, as a reward of valour. The Park and grounds are highly picturesque and beautiful : they offer a pleasing day's excursion from the City of



Brussels. An hundred bonniers, or upwards of two hundred and fifty acres of this Wood are cut down annually for the supply of the City of Brussels; the profits belong to the Government. The Jesuits, in the time of Maria Theresa, had nearly obtained an exclusive grant of the whole.

In the several large ponds in the vicinity of the City, numerous swans are bred and nourished; they serve greatly to enliven the Summer evenings walks.

About seven leagues from Brussels, and near the Forest of Soignes, the River Senne takes its rise, and runs through the City in a direction from N. E. to the S. W. tending greatly to promote the health of the inhabitants; by its communication with the Scheldt, it contributes also to the supply of the town with the necessaries of life, at a moderate rate; after passing through Brussels, it runs under the Antwerp Canal near Vilvorde—it was enlarged in 1346. This Canal which goes towards Antwerp, was commenced 11 June, 1550 (and was rendered navigable 11 Oct. 1561. It was cut under the direction of Renaldi and empties itself into the River Rupel, which runs into the Scheldt) it is to be regretted that it was not continued to Antwerp, from the other side of the River Rupel, which you pass in a ferry-boat, and pursue the route by land. The Barge for Antwerp, starts precisely at eight o'clock every morning.

The very great variety of walks and rides through the neighbouring villages and the country round about Brussels cannot fail to please; in the Spring, Summer and Autumnal Seasons, they are truly delightful. Nightingales abound and cheer the groves with their song. Nor is Winter without its charms—a frosty dry season affords a variety of enjoyments, so kindly hath nature's God provided for the hap-



pineness of his creatures—it is man alone that makes man miserable. The rural Village of Boitsfort, 6 miles from Brussels, cannot fail to please. In the Summer Season numerous excursions are made here and large parties are seen rambling through the Woods : the scenery is truly picturesque and affords many specimens for the Artist. It is very populous, has an overshot Corn Mill, Brewery, etc. etc. and greatly resembles a Swiss Village.

The Emperor Charles V. in 1521, when on a shooting party in the Forest of Soigny, had parted from his Suite : he came to the cottage of a peasant at Boitsfort and asked somewhat to eat. Not knowing him, they gave him some roasted hare “*Pourvu, dit-il, que tu n'en dise rien à Charles, car il me ferait mettre en prison.*” At length his companions found the Emperor in the cottage. The Cottager astonished, threw himself at his feet to ask his pardon. The Emperor encouraged him and ordered him to come to Court with a load of brooms, making of which was his occupation, and having loyally recompenced him, he granted permission to him and the inhabitants of Boitsfort to cut in the Wood of Soigny, the necessary branches to make brooms, a privilege which they still enjoy.

The village of Vilvorde, six miles from Brussels on the Antwerp Canal, offers objects that will employ a day with satisfaction. The interior of the village Church is grand, each side of the choir is embellished with stalls richly carved as in Cathedrals : here are, also, some few good paintings. During high mass, the organ was playing the well known Overture to Lodoiska, and other theatrical tunes. The Village is remarkably neat and has a very spacious market-place; here Tindal, the first translator of the English Bible suffered martyrdom in 1536. Notice par-



ticnlarly near this Village, the Penitentiary or great Prison, the regulations of which are, in many respects, excellent, and worthy of observation; it is divided into various compartments; several of the criminals who have been guilty of murder, have had their punishments commuted into imprisonment for life : Among the female prisoners, are many for the crime of infanticide. I have tasted the food and can testify that it is wholesome; the prisoners are employed in winding flax, making coarse linens, shoes, hats, carpets, and in a Coach Manufactory, with smithery on a considerable scale; an elegant Coach had just been completed. The beds, the wards for the sick, and the rooms where the criminals labour, are all clean and wholesome; but they do not appear to be sufficiently ventilated. Vinegar scattered from time to time in the wards, would much contribute to health. Part of their earnings is allowed for their maintenance, and part for a fund, which is given them when their term of punishment expires, which is proportioned to the degree of crime. Two prisoners are allowed to each bed, this is highly objectionable. Nor does it appear that sufficient care is taken to instil moral and religious principles; complete toleration is allowed; and a chapel is appointed for the catholics, but protestants are not compelled to attend. The total number of prisoners consisted of 1229, of which the greater part were males. This prison and that of Ghent were the only two on this plan.

Vilvorde claims to have been the place where the societies of Beguin nuns were first instituted. A few Nuns are still resident there. In the gardens of a respectable cabaret at the extremity of the village, stands a sun dial, constructed with much ingenuity and science; it is about thirty inches in diameter, and when the sun shines, tells the hour of the day at Cadiz, Constantinople, Madrid,



Smyrna, Brest, Pekin, Mexico, Vienna and Vilvorde. It was made in 1801, by J. Provost, who kept an academy in this village, and is dedicated "Aux amis des arts."

The Netherlands cannot boast that rich scenery, that picturesque beauty, which the irregular surface of Britain affords; but the extensive levels which they present on every side, are highly favourable to agriculture; you meet with no hills from Ostend until you approach Brussels, and from the high tower of the church of St. Bavon, at Ghent, the whole circuit of the horizon presents an extensive uninterrupted plain. No country can boast so many fine cities contiguous to each other as the Netherlands; they fully substantiate all that has been said of their ancient populousness; and when the very comfortable accommodation met with at the several inns, and the charges are considered, it will be found that travelling is more moderate here, considering the comforts, than in any part of Europe.

I am about to visit Antwerp, from whence expect to hear again.

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## LETTER VIII.

### ANTWERP.

THIS letter will inform you of the several objects worthy your attention when you visit Antwerp, and furnish you with some anecdotes connected therewith.



The arms of the city of Antwerp consist of two hands and a triangular castle: a man holding the hand of a giant, is placed in several parts of the city. Fabulous tradition tells, that Brabant took its name from a Roman named Salvius Brabon, who came with Julius Cæsar, and that on the banks of the Scheldt, where Antwerp is now situated, dwelt a giant named Antigonus, in a castle of his own construction, and that he cut off the hand of all who refused to pay him tribute. Salvius Brabon vanquished this giant, and threw his hand into the sea, and called the fortress *Handwerpen*, which interpreted is *hand thrown*. From this tradition may have arisen the custom of carrying in several of the public processions enormous giants, which custom is still maintained in several cities of the Netherlands: although some state that it originated at the time of the crusades, and was used to increase the hatred against the Saracens, and to stimulate the people to engage in the holy wars, as they were very improperly denominated.

Antwerp is situated on the west side of the Scheldt, in latitude  $51^{\circ} 12'$  N. and longitude  $4^{\circ} 15'$  E. from Greenwich. It was formerly a marquisat of the empire, and claims to rank the third city of Brabant. It was founded in 963, by the emperor Otho II. and after his death passed to Godefroy of Ardennes. The house of Ardennes being extinct, the emperor Henry IV. gave it to the celebrated Godefroy of Bouillon, whose valour contributed greatly to the conquest of Jerusalem, of which he was proclaimed the first king.

The structure of many of its buildings prove its high antiquity. Henry I. duke of Brabant, enlarged it in 1201, but it was considerably extended under John III. in 1314,



and in the time of Charles V. it could scarcely contain its numerous inhabitants, which were upwards of 200,000, whereas its present population is only 56,318.

Christianity is said to have been introduced into Antwerp by St. Amand, who built a church there about the year 650. This city was in great splendour at the close of the fifteenth century; the general grandeur of its architecture and the magnificent internal decorations of many of the houses amply testify its ancient greatness. It was once one of the richest cities of Europe. When the United Provinces threw off the Spanish yoke, they gained the command of the Scheldt, blocked up the harbour, and transferred its commerce to Amsterdam.

The treckschuyt starts from Brussels to Antwerp every morning, precisely at eight o'clock, from the head of the canal, which runs on the side of l'Allée Verte for upwards of a mile, and passes a modern-built cottage on the left, the gardens and grounds of which are laid out in the English style; above which, on a hill, stands the palace of Laeken, a fine building, but the dome over the centre is too lofty and heavy for the other parts of the architecture. On the banks of the canal are also several villas, with gardens, grounds and meadows delightfully situated, in the viewing of which, as they appear in succession, the time passes very agreeably until you reach Vilvorde, where you arrive at the first lock, and on quitting the barge, embark in another, and proceed towards Ubeeck.

Passing grande and petite Villebrouke, and several locks, you arrive at the river Rupel, and are ferried over to Boun, from whence the diligence conveys you to



Antwerp. It admits fifteen passengers. In my excursion there, a man and woman of the class of peasants, amused themselves by drolleries, which to an English traveller appear ludicrous and disgusting. A mutton chop, which the fair Belgian was eating from her fingers, was snatched from her by the droll opposite, who bit off a piece, and then put the remainder to her mouth to bite also; she snatched at it in her turn, but he maintained his hold of part of it, and it was separated, each devouring their respective pieces—all this accompanied with a sort of pleasantry or buffoonery, which appears to have undergone no alteration since the times of the celebrated Flemish painters.

Antwerp, in the houses, the streets, the cleanliness and the general appearance of the shops, resembles Ghent and Bruges, rather than Brussels. La Place de Meir, or principal street of the city, is as wide in some parts as Portland Place in London. In this street are two collections of pictures for sale, the one belonging to N. F. Beekman, the other to Snyers; in the latter particularly will be found some pictures of the very first class. The shops at Antwerp are not so well stocked as those in Brussels. Provisions are nearly the same in price; house-rent much more moderate; the docks, and the basin on the banks of the Scheldt are grand, and restoring to the state in which they were, one of the finest in the city, near the quays has been recently demolished, and the area is to be occupied as a corn-market. The tide rises at Antwerp twenty feet, which enables vessels of the greatest burden to come close to the quays.

When the Dutch threw off the Spanish yoke, they



ruined the commerce of Antwerp by sinking vessels, laden with stones, in the Scheldt; but when, in 1792 and 1793, the French took possession of the city, they immediately, to conciliate the Belgians, proclaimed the navigation of that river to be free. The breadth of the Scheldt at *la Tête de Flandre* is 700 metres; the new quays constructed on the side of the river are planted with trees and form agreeable promenades.

The exchange should also be seen; it was built in 1531; the pillars are of grey marble. This building was the model after which the Royal Exchange in London was built. In the magazine of this city the giants are kept, which are carried about in processions.

The subterraneous canals, which once conveyed the merchandize from the vessels to the several magazines of the merchants, still remain, but are converted into sewers for the use of the city.

The Friday's market in the lower part of the city, very much resembles rag-fair in London.

The churches at Antwerp are superior to any in the Netherlands. The church of St. Boromee, formerly belonging to the jesuits, was built in 1614, and contains some beautiful marbles, as well in its domes as its altars, it might be named the church of marbles. After the suppression of the jesuits, this church was shut up for several years, and was intended by the Dutch government for the use of the protestants, but this excited such an alarm that for the present the intention has been abandoned, although the priests connected with the church of Notre Dame favoured the plan, as they conceive that church to attract many who



would otherwise attend at the cathedral. The altar-piece of St. Boromee represents Simeon in the temple, with the infant Jesus, and is painted by De Lin. The carvings of the communion table are fine, and there is a good picture, by De Crayer, of a chevalier receiving the communion.

In the church of St. Jacques, built about 1300, notice a fine portrait of Lanschot, by Vandyke, greatly resembling Shakspeare; the coup d'œil on entrance is grand. In the chapel of the sacrament observe a fine statue of St. Peter, by Verbruggen. In this church is a large marble font with brass cover, and also the equatorial circle of a globe; the figure of Time, with his scythe, points to the hour of the day, as the circle revolves round its centre. An alto-relievo by Ververde, after a design of Vandyke, and fine sculptured marble over the principal altar. Observe also a small circular medallion of the annunciation; the character of the virgin is sweetly portrayed. The painted glass windows in this church are of a superior description, and particularly one after Leonarda da Vinci, of the Lord's supper. Behind the principal altar-piece is the tomb of Rubens and his family, with inscriptions, and a painting by his own hand, of himself, his wives, his children, and his parents. He was buried here the 31st May, 1640. The painting represents a holy family, with the child Jesus on the knees of his mother. Above the altar-piece is a marble statue of the virgin brought by Rubens from Rome.

The parish church of St. Andrew was built in 1529, and contains a mausoleum built to the memory of Mary, queen of Scots, at the expence of two English ladies, refugees in this city. Here is also a fine statue of Peter,



a chef-d'œuvre of Quellyn, and the bas-relievs around the communion are master-pieces of art by Verbruggen.

In the church of the Dominicans, observe near the side entrance, a representation of mount Calvary, surrounded by sculpture, in stone, of the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the virgin, the saviour, the cross, and the rocks. Descending some steps beneath the rocks, you behold a representation of purgatory, the spirits in prison, and the saviour lying near it, the body covered with white silk and silver fringe. Here are also some excellent carvings in wood, and three paintings illustrative of the history of Christ, by Rubens and Vandyke: the crucifixion, the bearing the cross, and the scourging—the latter of the very first class. The church of St. Augustin's, built in 1602, contains several good pictures, both of the ancient and modern school. The principal altar is executed by Verbruggen, after a design of Rubens, but is out of condition. On the right hand, at entering, is a large picture by a modern artist, Van Bre, which represents the baptism of the Saviour; the composition is fine, and the colouring rich and harmonious—it possesses both beauties and defects.

However protracted your stay may be in Antwerp, you should scarcely suffer a day to pass without viewing the cathedral. The external structure is grand: the tower is 466 feet high, including the cross, which is 15 feet, the whole being built in the fine gothic of Westminster Abbey; but the large gilded dial of the clock destroys in some measure the grandeur of the effect. The cathedral measures internally 500 feet in length, 240 in breadth and 466 in height. It was commenced in 1422, under the direction of John Amelius, one of the most celebrated



artists of his time, and finished in 1518, comprehending a period of 96 years. It contains 125 fine columns the principal altar was raised in 1624, after a design of Rubens. It was pillaged of many of its images in 1566, and completely robbed of its treasures by the French armies, in 1797, which were publicly sold. It has been restored to its present state in 1810, under the direction of Mons. Herbouville, and does honour to his taste. Its chief bell weighs 16,000 lbs. and requires sixteen men to sound it.

Let your entrance be at the principal door, the effect from this point being more striking and sublime. This cathedral is far superior to any other in the Netherlands; the grandeur of the whole is not here frittered away by gildings and ornaments in false taste. The principal paintings were removed by order of Napoleon Bonaparte, some of them are again restored to the situations from which they were taken. A few only remain, but they are of a very superior class. The disciples at Emmaus, by M. Hareens of Antwerp, a modern artist, well merits observation. The elevation and the descent from the cross, both by Rubens, and in his best manner, will engage a long attention and great admiration: the descent has ever been estimated as one of the finest of his works. Approaching the centre of the church, and looking towards the spire, the painting represents angels, principalities and powers uniting in adoration and praise. It was painted by Cornelius Schultz, and is inscribed in the surrounding circle, *Choros angelorum exaltata est sancta Dei genetrix super.*

In the chapel to the right of the choir is a picture by the elder Francken, painted in 1587, representing our Saviour among the doctors. The painting is indifferent,



but it contains the portraits of Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, Huss and others.

The principal altar-piece, by Rubens, is also a gem of great value; the subject the ascension; and the harmony and dignity of the characters all combine to fix the attention. The group of cherubs, the attendant angels, the women, and the disciples, are truly admirable. Rubens is said to have painted this in eight days, and to have received about 130*l.* for it. Here is, also, a very fine marble statue, by Quellyn, of F. Marius Ambrosius Capello, seventh bishop of Antwerp, A. D. 1676.

In a chapel behind the choir are two pictures of the fifteenth century, and the marble altar-piece is the only one which escaped the fury of the French despoiliations.

The marble columns which support the organ are executed on a bold design; the organ is fine, and may frequently be heard at evening vespers.

The communion table, by A. Quellyn, is superb. The painted glass, by Diepenbeck, is a monument of the house of Orange.

At the base of the tower is the epitaph of the renowned Quintin Metsys. On an escutcheon on the side is inscribed:

*L'amour pour une belle,  
De Vulcan fit Apelles.*

By removing the chapels and every extraneous decoration from this church, the unity of design is preserved, and the whole may be considered as one of the most beau-



tiful specimens of gothic architecture that the world has ever produced. It was in this church that Philip II. king of Spain, held, on the 25th of January, 1355, a chapter of the order of the Golden Fleece, and created nineteen knights, among which was king Henry VIII. of England. The French, in 1797, ransacked this church, and sold its treasures. In 1810, Mons. Herbouville, then prefect of the department, turned his attention to restore it to its original state. Several other fine pictures are expected to be placed in this church.

A very fine private collection of paintings belonging to Monsieur Van Lanket, in the Place de Meir, is open to the inspection of travellers. The collection does honour to his judgment and taste. There are some fine specimens by Rubens, Vandyke, Wouvermans, Vanderheyden, Fyfe, Teniers, Berghem, Cuyp, and others. I would particularly call your attention to the following numbers in the catalogue, viz: -- 8, 38, 59, 62, 65, 80, 99, 94, 95, 112, 128, 130.

Antwerp contains twenty squares, numerous streets, and houses, principally of free-stone, many of them bearing evident marks of very great antiquity. It has many public buildings, a royal academy of painting, and a public library, open every day, from ten to three, Sundays and festivals excepted. In the Rue de Rubens, the house which was once inhabited by that great artist, is yet to be seen, and the chair he used is preserved in the museum of paintings. The maison de ville was commenced to be built in 1650, and is faced chiefly with marble, but is now in a state of great dilapidation.

Every person born in this city, although both his parents were foreigners, is free of it in right of his birth.



The docks were once the largest and most complete in Europe: one basin will contain forty sail of the line; they were considerably injured by the British expedition in the late war, but are now restoring to their former magnificence. Antwerp was made a free port in 1794.

A society was established at Antwerp, by a spirit of narrow and injudicious commercial policy, not only to prevent the use of any English manufactured goods, but to preclude purchasing any goods imported in British vessels.

In the environs of Antwerp are numerous country houses or villas. The citadel on the banks of the Scheldt well merits your attention. It contains fifteen wells, and is 2500 paces in circumference. It is a regular pentagon, having six bastions, with covered way, fosse, supplied with water from the Scheldt, and the out-works necessary to a strong fortification. It was erected in 1568, by the Duke d'Alva, who, in 1571, placed in this city the famous statue of himself, made of the cannon he had taken, but which was soon after broken to pieces with deserved contempt.

The arsenal, one of the largest in Europe, may be viewed the same day. Antwerp suffered greatly during the religious wars of the sixteenth century: the protestants, when successful, pulled down all the images from the churches; and, in 1576, the Spaniards took part with them, having mutinied for want of pay: they surprized the city and a terrible carnage ensued. Upwards of 600 houses were burnt, and 10,000 of the inhabitants were put to the sword; the pillage and slaughter lasted three days.

Among the numerous fine pictures of Rubens's, Mons.



Van Havre holds, as an heir loom belonging to five different families, the celebrated portrait of a young lady whom the painter intended to marry: she was seized with the small pox, and died. It has deservedly been ranked among his finest productions: it possesses great simplicity and forces its way to admiration. It is estimated at 50,000 francs, and is denominated "Le Chapeau de Paille."

On the grounds on the east side of the Scheldt, and opposite to Antwerp, Napoleon had planned a new city, to have been built, and named after himself, which was to have been fortified. The excavations for the foundations of which are still to be seen. The French took the city of Antwerp in 1792, and quitted it in 1793. In the time of the republic, it was again attacked by them, and taken; they quitted it again in May, 1814, after a bombardment of three days and a blockade of four months. The British destroyed several of the basins and the quays.

The gardens of Mons. M. Smets, about two miles out of Antwerp, merit inspection and admiration; they are ornamented with a pagoda, bridges, and hermitage, several ingenious deceptions are exhibited.

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## LETTER IX.

### MALINES.

RETURNING from Antwerp to Brussels in the afternoon, I reached Malines as the shades of evening came on: the



effect of the cathedral church at this hour was truly grand ; it arose in sombre majesty above every other structure, and its grand outlines against the sky in the back-ground, were sublime. Ancient manuscripts relate, that Count Adon, in the eighth century, was the sovereign of Malines ; from other documents it appears, that the sovereignty appertained to the bishopric of Liege, until 1333. It is now the metropolitan see, which had been some time vacant, the Prince de Mean has lately been appointed archbishop.

This city is situated in a plain, through which runs the river Dyle ; the streets are very wide, and many of the houses spacious : it has also numerous stone bridges.

The magnificent church of St. Rombout was commenced in the twelfth century, but was not entirely completed until the fifteenth. It contained a tomb of Gautier de Berthouts who was buried there in 1219, and several other ancient monuments, which have been destroyed in the numerous revolutions which the Low Countries have experienced.

The citizens of Malines having rendered great services to Charles, Duke of Burgundy, in 1475, he granted them several very peculiar privileges. In 1546, a dreadful disaster occurred in this city ; a thunderbolt fell on the castle, which contained a quantity of gunpowder, and by its explosion 200 men were killed, 600 wounded, 300 houses were thrown down, and many others greatly damaged : the sound was heard at Brussels and at Antwerp. The present population of Malines is about 16,600.

In the church of Notre Dame de Hanswyck, was formerly a statue of the virgin Mary, *reported* to have been



brought there in a boat, which stopped, of *its own accord*, to testify her desire to be worshipped there. This image is destroyed. Little worthy of observation will be found in this church, excepting the pulpit.

In the church of St. Peter, formerly of the Jesuits, may be seen, a series of paintings by Blendef, Quelten, Eykout and Coxier, which delineate several events in the life of St. Xavier, the much-respected missionary to the Indies. The church of St. John, although on a small scale, has much architectural beauty: the principal altar-piece, the adoration of the wise men, by P. P. Rubens, is one of his finest productions; for which he received fourteen hundred florins only, equal to about one hundred pounds sterling. Above this are placed three other pictures by Rubens; the birth of Christ, the taking down from the cross, and the resurrection.

In the church of St. Catherine there is nothing remarkable; but the church of the Beguinage, dedicated to St. Joseph, is striking. The altar-piece by L. Francois, and other pictures by Boyermans and Coxier, merit observation. I entered it at the hour of vespers; numerous Beguin nuns and two noviciates, all at their devotions, presented a picturesque effect. The Beguinage was anciently on a grand scale, and contained about 1400 inhabitants. It was founded in 1249, and is far superior to that at Brussels. There is also a smaller Beguinage in this city.

The cathedral church of St. Rombout, who was bishop of Dublin, and the son of one of the kings of Ireland, exhibits the greatest beauties; its external architecture is composed of the fine gothic, and is truly magnificent; it



measures 350 feet, or 97 metres and 30 centimes in height, without the intended tower, which was never erected; had that been completed, this would have been the loftiest church in Belgium. On entering it, the coup d'œil is truly fine; here are several well-painted pictures, one by Francis Floris; an altar-piece of the crucifixion, by Vandyck, and several others. The first stone of the tower was laid by John Muysen, May 22, 1452. The church contains six bells, the largest of which, named Salvator, weighs 15,251 lbs. and several ancient tombs, marble monuments, alto-relievos and altars of excellent workmanship. In the collegiate church of Notre Dame is, perhaps, one of the very finest of Rubens's productions; the subject, Christ entering into Simon Peter's ship, and the miraculous draught of fishes; in composition and colouring, this painting may rank with the cartoons of Raphael. In this city is an institution for the education of priests of the catholic faith; it contains, at present, about 150 in number, who pay about 400 francs each, annually; the extra expences of the establishment are defrayed by the government; there is a small church adjoining, where the young men are instructed in the rites of the Romish church, and in singing, the laity not being permitted to join in this act of public worship. The priests are known by the name of "Les Corbeaux," in derision, which strongly intimates the estimation in which the priesthood is held.

The churches at Malines exhibit proofs of its former magnificence and its present insignificance; in 1763 it contained eighteen churches. House-rent is very moderate, although very few houses are to be let: about ten British families are now resident here. The ramparts round the city are far preferable to those of Brussels, being more airy, kept in excellent order, and provided



with numerous garden seats, well painted and in good repair. The walks on the ramparts afford a fine view of the city. Crossing the Dyle, you arrive at a water-mill, which is appropriated to the grinding of corn, sawing of planks, and beating of flax: here are also several extensive bleacheries and manufactories of hats. The lace merchants, once so flourishing, complain greatly of stagnation in trade; properly speaking, they never were manufacturers; the lace is made by women and children, and sold to the merchants; or the latter provide materials, and pay by the yard for the workmanship. The second Saturday in October a capital horse and cattle fair is held here.

The cannon-foundry exists here no longer; a wind-mill is erected on the spot. The once celebrated gardens of Pittseberg are planted with wheat and potatoes; the mansion is in a state of delapidation. The great clock of St. Rombout sounds eight times each hour—the hour, half-hour, quarter, and half-quarter; and, as usual in Belgium, strikes the hour twice.

In the centre of the Grande Place is a sun-dial of the same dimensions as the clock, the gnomon of which is constructed with much ingenuity. At the Hotel de Grue, Malines, is an inscription, denoting that the emperor Joseph II. dined there on the 20th of June, 1781.

Flemish is spoken principally in Malines; at the inns French is well understood. The fine canal which runs through the city communicates with Antwerp and Louvain. Malines is still celebrated for its tanneries and hat manufactories; also for excellent pork and good butcher's meat. A law is enforced here to prevent any butcher from killing



more than one ox each week: the intention is to compel the butchers to bring the best meat to market. The banks of the canal are, in many places, cultivated, and the neighbouring lands exhibit symptoms of extraordinary fertility.

The superior and surprising effect produced in the cathedral church of Notre Dame, at Antwerp, by removing the side altars and decorations of an inferior class, would, if extended to all the churches of the Netherlands, produce such an amazing improvement, and exhibit such fine masses of grand architecture, as could not fail to be viewed with a lively interest, and excite a renewed attention to such fine structures. As a Protestant, I cannot conclude these remarks without strongly expressing my hopes that the time is not far distant when every image will be laid in the dust, and the One living and true God be worshipped in the way he has commanded.

Thus have I, in a cursory way, described to you all that appears most worthy of notice in some of the once splendid cities of the Netherlands. Except in architecture and paintings, scarce a shadow remains of their former magnificence.

I purpose in my next to commence by furnishing you with a short abstract of the history of the Low Countries, from the earliest period to the establishment of the present monarchy. Till then, adieu once more.

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## LETTER X.

BRUSSELS.

THE early history of Belgium is involved in a similar obscurity to that of most other states. It is generally believed, that it was first peopled by the Celts, who inhabited the southern parts of Europe, or ancient Gaul. Cæsar observes: *Qui ipsorum lingua, Celtæ Galli appellantur.* They were subdued by the Belgæ, descendants of the ancient Scythians. It is clearly ascertained that the Belgæ were established in this country one hundred and twelve years before the Christian era, and were conquered by Julius Cæsar, 47 B. C.

The lands of Belgium were in a good state of cultivation, previous to the invasion of the Romans. From Cæsar's Commentaries we learn that the Nervians, or more northern nations of the Belgæ, were a valorous people, united under one chief, possessing very correct ideas upon the consequences of luxury and vice. They made their last stand on the banks of the Sambre. Five hundred men only remained, out of the sixty thousand which they brought into the field. Under Augustus, the northern division of Belgium, including the two provinces of Holland and Utrecht, became a Pretorian province.

All ancient historians agree, that the Belgæ were a very numerous, industrious and brave people. In the seventh century, the Frisians invaded them on the north. They yielded to the Franks in the eighth century; so that the



present race of Belgians may be considered as originally composed of the Belgæ, the Frisians and the Franks. Cæsar characterises them as the most valiant of the Gauls: "*Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgæ.*" Belgium may be considered as the cradle of the French monarchy.

On the decline of the Roman empire, Charlemagne swayed the sceptre over great part of Europe; but the weakness of his son Louis le Debonnaire induced many states to throw off their allegiance, among others the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries.

After many violent struggles they became divided, and were governed by petty sovereigns, under the titles of dukes, marquises and counts. The earldoms of Holland, Flanders and Hainault obtained great influence in the political affairs of Europe. In 864 A. D. Flanders was granted to Baldwin, earl of Flanders, France reserving the sovereignty; but Flanders was dismembered from France, 866 A. D.

Throughout the whole period of the Belgian history, it is observable, that the *vox populi* has always maintained a most powerful influence; the inhabitants are uniformly exhibited as manfully and successfully struggling for their rights and privileges, availing themselves of frequent demands made upon them for supplies, to secure and to extend their own liberties. About the middle of the fifteenth century, the several states into which the Netherlands were divided, fell under the dominion of the house of Burgundy; the full enjoyment of their ancient privileges being guaranteed unto them. They obtained the name of Les Pays Bas, or the Low Countries, from their situation in respect of Germany.



Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent and Bruges, contained a population at that period, of upwards of 600,000 persons, of whom it is supposed that near 150,000 were employed in the several branches of the woollen manufactories alone. During the sovereignty of the dukes of Burgundy, Brabant and Flanders arrived at the highest degree of prosperity; about the year 1487 they seem to have reached the zenith of their glory; their natural advantages, their extensive commerce, and the freedom which they enjoyed, gave them great political importance: their fleets were at this time the most powerful in Europe.

Philippe, surnamed the Good, instituted, in 1430, at Bruges, the order of the Golden Fleece, and paid to England 200,000 golden crowns, to ransom the duke of Orleans, who was taken prisoner by the English, at the battle of Agincourt. Philippe died in 1467.

After the death of Charles the Bold, (who married four wives, one of which was Margaret of York, sister to Edward IV. of England,) on the 5th of January, 1477, at the battle of Nanci, in Lorrain, the duchy of Burgundy became united to the throne of France, under Louis XI. but his other states passed into the hands of the princess Mary, his daughter, who fixed her residence in the Low Countries. This princess convoked the states of Flanders; taking advantage of the embarrassments of their sovereign, to augment their own power, they formed a council of regency, which kept her in a constant state of dependance, and having detected her in correspondence with the French king, they brought Hugonnet and Imbercourt, two of her counsellors, to trial, and condemned and executed them, although she rushed upon the scaffold, and with tears solicited their pardon; deaf to her intreaties, the execu-



tioner was compelled to do his duty before her face. After witnessing the execution, she was carried almost lifeless to her palace. Hugonnet obtained permission to write a few lines to his afflicted wife, whom he addressed as his sister and faithful friend, that contain sentiments which, with some exceptions, are well deserving of record:--

“ Console yourself,” says he, “ for a misfortune attached to humanity ; remember, that, at my age, death is but little accelerated ; let not the punishment destined for me make an impression upon your mind ; shame attaches upon crime, but I die innocent ; our children need not blush for the condemnation of their unhappy father ; if deprived of their property, GOD, who gave them life, can provide for them, and direct them by goodness and mercy ; adieu, my sister, and my faithful friend, I commit you and our children to GOD, and his glorious mother.--Holy Thursday, which I believe to be my last day.”

Irritated at the conduct of the Belgians, Louis entered Artois, and took Tournay and Cambray. The inhabitants of Ghent promised the dominions of Burgundy and the hand of Mary, to the chief who should be victorious over the French. They took from prison Adolphus of Guelderland, who had been disinherited by his father, and appointed him their general ; but inexperienced and distrusted by his troops, he was beaten, and fell in the battle. His death freed Mary from the destiny which awaited her. The archduke Maximilian, son of Frederick the third, emperor of Austria, was successful in obtaining her hand. He was married to her at Ghent, on the 18th of August, 1477, greatly against the will of the French king. She died in 1482, in the 24th year of her age, from



an accident which occurred to her whilst taking her favourite amusement of hawking. The Flemings, considering Maximilian as a stranger who wished to enslave them, raised the standard of revolt against him, placed his children under the direction of the states of Flanders, and Maximilian was compelled to submit to the marriage of his daughter with the dauphin of France. But he seized the occasion of the death of Louis XI. to attack the Flemings, and threatened to give up Ghent to plunder: he entered it with about 5000 German troops, gave it up to pillage, and burnt and destroyed part thereof.

Incensed by the frequent insurrections of the Flemings, and educated in maxims of arbitrary power, he swayed an iron sceptre over them. He was at Zealand, punishing some mutineers, when he heard of the revolt of Ghent, and fearing that other cities might follow the same example, he hastened to Bruges, left his troops in the neighbouring villages, and entered it with his ordinary guard: after some imprudent altercations on his part, and violence on that of the people, they seized him, and bore him a prisoner to the castle. Maximilian never exhibited more greatness of character than during his imprisonment: some of the soldiers who were appointed to guard him, fell at his feet to implore his pardon, and testify their aversion to the task.—“ Rise,” said he, obey your superiors.”

Cleves, and many other cities armed in his favour, and after languishing four months in prison, he learned that his father, the emperor, was also taking up arms for him, which so intimidated the inhabitants of Bruges, that they proposed terms for his release; when he had agreed to them, they compelled him to ratify them, by a public act,



as well as to take an oath of amnesty, and give them hostages for the due execution of all his engagements.

The archduke of Austria, Philip the Handsome, married, in 1496, Joanna of Arragon, daughter and heiress of Ferdinand, king of Arragon, and Isabella, queen of Castile; and from this marriage, on the 24th February, 1500, Charles V. was born at Ghent. At the age of fifteen he began to reign: the early periods of his history witnessed the opulence and prosperity of the seventeen United Provinces, which then contained several hundred opulent cities, towns and villages. He ingratiated himself with his people; born among them, and feeling a strong attachment towards them, he respected their privileges, and gained their confidence.

In his early years he bore the title of duke of Luxembourg. He became king of Spain in 1516, and in 1519 he was elevated to the throne of the empire. In 1519, he gained the memorable battle of Pavia, when Francis I. was taken prisoner. He possessed a most insatiable ambition, and was successful in his expeditions against Tunis, in 1535; Algiers, in 1541, and also against Piedmont and Milan.

During his reign the Reformation had made considerable progress. It was greatly accelerated by the increased number of indulgences, the vices and the bigotry of the Romish clergy: devoted to the catholic religion, and naturally inclined to superstition, his mind, although strong and enlarged upon other subjects, became contracted and cruel upon this. The people and the clergy availed themselves of his ardent zeal, and he consented to introduce into his dominions the Inquisition, with all the horrors accompany-



ng it; not content to punish crimes merely with an active ferocity, it sought out for victims whom it could denominate criminals. With the deepest concern, he beheld, in 1536, Ghent, the place of his nativity, revolt against him, its inhabitants inviting Francis I. of France to assist them, and take possession of those countries, which were once attached to the French empire. But Charles subdued them, and on the anniversary of his birth-day, six and twenty of the principal citizens lost their lives on the scaffold: it was a favourite maxim with the duke d'Alva, his general, that a country of rebels ought to be destroyed. Charles V. wished to constitute Flanders a kingdom, and proposed it several times in council.

The year 1522 is memorable as being the commencement of the proceedings against the Protestants at Brussels.

In June, 1548, the emperor Maximilian having married the heiress to the house of Burgundy, the Low Countries became annexed to the empire, with some reserved privileges.

I cannot but indulge the hope, that the events which took place in the reign of Charles V. and in the subsequent reign of Philip, are so indelibly engraved in blood and human misery, as to become imperishable memorials, fraught with wisdom, to teach the inhabitants of the Netherlands and the world at large, the dreadful effects of an intolerant, persecuting spirit. Among the converts to protestantism, were found many of the best and principal manufacturers, particularly of woollen cloths, who were compelled to fly, and carried with them to



other countries that knowledge which had so materially enriched their own.

On the 25th October, 1555, the Emperor convoked a meeting of the States General at Brussels, where, in the presence of many foreign potentates, and a most brilliant court, he abdicated the sovereignty of the Low Countries in favor of Philip II. his son, and soon after embarked for the convent of St. Justus, in Spain, which he had fixed upon for his retreat from the world; his character exhibits the most wonderful contradictions.

Philip II. took no pains to secure the affections of his people: educated in maxims of arbitrary government, he soon rendered himself obnoxious. He established the Inquisition, against the will of his subjects. The protestants increased rapidly, and trembled for their safety under a monarch, who said, that if his own son was suspected of heresy, he would deliver him over to the severities of the Inquisition; such was his antipathy to them, that he declared, if executioners were required, he would become one himself. The Pope created fourteen new bishops, and issued the most rigorous edicts against the partisans of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin: the brothers of the Prince of Orange and Count Brederode openly avowed themselves protestants, and a deputation was sent to Philip, in Spain, to soften his animosities, which received from that monarch the most direct orders to support the Inquisition; for he observed, that he would rather be without subjects than reign over heretics. From this period may be dated the commencement of the ruin of the Low Countries.

The Prince of Orange received information that the



king had formed a secret plan against his life; and an order was issued to pursue the protestants without pity; numbers of the citizens suffered daily on account of their religion; their patience and firmness in the midst of torments, excited a strong hatred against the author of their miseries; many provinces revolted, the prisons were forced, and a general confederation was entered into, to suppress the inquisition. The example was followed by a number of the nobility and citizens, both catholics and protestants, and the confederation became general. The Prince of Orange and Count Horn, by retiring from the court, gave their tacit approbation, at least, to these proceedings.

On the 5th April, 1566, four hundred gentlemen, with the Prince Brederode at their head, went from the Hotel de Culembourg, at Brussels, to an audience of the Princess, and, with all that firmness which accompanies true courage and a just cause, demanded the abolition of the Inquisition. The Count of Berlaimont said to her, "*Ne craignez rien Madame, ce n'est q'une bande de gueux.*" (Fear nothing Madam, they are only a band of beggars;) this word became the signal of a party, and was the occasion of many subsequent bloody combats. John of Bergue, Governor of Hainault and Florent of Montmorency, lord of Montigny, were sent into Spain to inform the king of the state of the Low Countries; the latter told the sovereign, that unless he conceded to them their requests, he would drive the nation to despair. The Duke d'Alva considered this wise counsel as a threat, and accusing the deputies of being connected with the discontented party, he imprisoned them; the former died there, and the latter was beheaded. The irritated protestants now became furious; they pillaged the convents,



destroyed the relics and images, and treated the priests with every kind of indignity; civil discords ensued on every side, and the king employed the cruel Duke d'Alva to execute his vengeance; as soon as the people heard of his arrival, and of the departure of the Prince of Orange, they were in the greatest consternation; the massacres were soon renewed, and terror became universal. The Duke d'Alva commenced his government in 1567:—he established a council, denominated the Council of Troubles, which the people named the Council of Blood. It is computed, that during his government, eighteen thousand of both sexes suffered death by the hands of the public executioner.

In August and September, 1566, the reformists, after having destroyed the altars and images, at Antwerp, Ghent, and elsewhere, threatened to do the same at Brussels.

In 1567, the Duke d'Alva arrived at Brussels, and on the 10th September, arrested the Counts d'Egmont and Horn, and several other respectable heads of the protestant cause, and ordered the magnificent hotel of the Count du Culembourg, who had himself fled, to be razed to its foundations.

The Prince of Orange was proscribed, and fled; his son, then thirteen years of age, was seized in the university, whilst pursuing his studies, and sent into Spain; the captain who guarded him, speaking one day disrespectfully of his father, the youth moved with indignation, and urged by filial piety, seized him and threw him from a window; in the fall he broke his neck. The council deliberated whether they should take the life of the prince,



but they resolved to save him, on account of the noble motive which had instigated him to the deed.

The spring of 1568 is remarkable for the cruel and bloody executions which the Duke d'Alva ordered. The 3d of April he had executed six of the citizens of Ghent; the 6th of the same month four others. The 22d May, he had one of the Protestant ministers burnt, and on the 1st of June, on the Place de Sablon, eighteen gentlemen of the best families were beheaded in the Grande Sablon, and a Calvinist minister was hung: and on the 5th of the same month, Lamoral Count d'Egmont and Phillippe de Montmorency, Count de Horne, of the order of the golden fleece, were beheaded in the Grande Place.

The celebrated peace of Ghent was signed in 1576, and approved by the prelates and nobles of Brussels. But the country internally was full of disorder; the plague raged violently; twenty-seven thousand persons are said to have fallen victims to it in Brussels. The Calvinists had driven the monks from the Abbaye de la Cambre, and made a fortress of their monastery. The Calvinists, previous to this time, in 1579, had only a few private houses to perform their devotional services in. But after the Prince of Orange had been recalled to Brussels, they greatly increased. An action took place between the two parties in the Cantersteen, in which the protestants were victorious, who destroyed the altars, images and relics of St. Michel, St. Gudule, St. Nicolas, and others of the churches.

The first public sermon of the Calvinists was preached in



one of the houses opposite the church of the Bogards. On the 1st of May a decree was issued to prohibit entirely and absolutely all exercise of the catholic religion in Brussels; in consequence of which, for four years, the public exercise of the catholic religion wholly ceased in Brussels.

Louvain still maintained the catholic religion, and its attachment to the king of Spain.

At length the protestants, who conducted themselves with the greatest indiscretion, violence and injustice, excited such animosity against them, that a deputation of the catholics applied to the duke of Parma, to retake possession of Brussels; and, after much commotion and dispute, a capitulation was signed. The protestants were allowed two years to arrange their affairs, and quit the city if they pleased, and the catholic religion, in 1585, was re-established.

The horror which the death of the principal citizens excited was universal, and by increasing the hatred against the Spaniards, occasioned the union of the republic of the United Provinces. But it is time to give you some respite. I shall resume this subject in my next. Adieu.

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## LETTER XI.

BRUSSELS.

RESUMING the subject of my last, the Prince of Orange, notwithstanding the defeat of his brother, by the Duke d'Alva, advanced into Brabant with an army of 28,000

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Germans. The Prince repeatedly offered the Duke battle, which he declined, and acting on the defensive only, took possession of several fortresses, and by delay, exhausted the armies of the Prince, whose numbers fell off for want of being regularly paid. So excessive was the vanity and pride of the Duke, that he caused a statue of himself, with a most adulatory inscription, to be erected at Antwerp, as before mentioned.

Being entirely occupied in securing Belgium, Holland escaped his fury. These states threw off the catholic religion, and the Prince of Orange was invested with the attributes of sovereign power. Exasperated and revengeful, the Duke d'Alva gave up the city of Malines to plunder and rapine, both protestants and catholics suffering without any distinction. He besieged Haarlem, in 1572, which was most bravely defended by its inhabitants; an ancient female, named Kennaw Haselaar, animated her sex by her eloquence, and enlisted three hundred females under her banner. Seven months and upwards Haarlem withstood the siege, and the city was in ruins. Its best warriors had fallen and famine had destroyed 13,000 of its inhabitants, all their food being consumed. Weakened and exhausted by extreme want and misery, they resolutely maintained their defence until they could resist no longer, and such was the cruelty of the Spaniards towards them, that the inhabitants of other cities resolved to perish, rather than fall under their yoke. At length on the 8th Nov. 1576, a treaty of peace was signed at Ghent, by the Prince of Orange and the States of Holland and Zealand on the one part, and the States General on the other, in which an amnesty was announced for the past, and an engagement entered into, to unite, and to drive the Spaniards from the country; the Romish religion, it was



agreed should be protected in all the countries, except Holland and Zealand; of these the Prince of Orange was declared Statholder. The 13th article declared that all pillars, inscriptions, and other signals erected by the Duke of Alva, should be taken down and demolished.

Philip II. attributing his loss of dominion over the Low Countries to the Prince of Orange, excited assassins to murder him; and issued an edict, dated Maestricht, 15th May, 1580, promising, on the word of a king, and as the servant of God, 25,000 crowns, a pardon for all crimes, and the rank of nobility, to whoever should bring the prince, dead or alive.

Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, was appointed the leader of the Spanish forces, and succeeded in the catholic countries, or the ten provinces of Belgium, to excite a strong interest in favour of Philip; nevertheless, they chose the Duke of Anjou, brother of Henry III. of France, for their sovereign, who offered to Elizabeth, queen of England, his hand and sovereignty. This princess refused the offer, and so slender were the ties by which he held his crown, that he would have been assassinated by the populace, if the Prince of Orange had not interfered in his favour. Henry III. at length, determined to assist him, and the French succeeded in taking Dunkirk, Dixmude and Dendermonde; but they failed against Ostend and Bruges, and attempting to take possession of Antwerp, by deceit and treason, were there defeated, and upwards of 1500 of them made prisoners.

During this time the Prince of Orange gained on the affections of his people; he was regarded as the father of his country: nevertheless, repeated attempts had been



made to assassinate him, by the popish party. Jauregni failed at Antwerp, and five others were defeated at Delft in the same design; when Gerard, who, to inspire confidence, had long pretended an ardent zeal for protestantism, and who having faithfully discharged a mission, in which he had been employed, was admitted to an interview with the prince, to receive some further instructions: as the prince rose from the table, Gerard fired three balls into his breast, and he fell in the presence of the princess. A profound consternation was spread through Holland, and the public indignation rose against the assassin. Excited and blinded by false views of religion, he gloried in his crime, and expected to gain heaven by it, maintaining that he was instigated to the act by divine command; to acquit the Spanish government of any share in it, he artfully charged it on the monks; but his family were ennobled, three seigniories and 4000 florins being given to them by the Duke of Parma, as a recompence. Gerard died by the public executioner, with a firmness worthy of a better cause. The youth and inability of Prince Maurice of Nassau, the son of the Prince of Orange, gave reason to fear that he did not possess sufficient influence to maintain his rights, which induced the people to offer the sovereignty to Henry III. of France, who refused it. It was then offered to Elizabeth of England, who also declined it; but, nevertheless, she sent both money and troops by her favourite Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom the Dutch invested with an authority superior to that which they had bestowed on their statholder, but which Dudley greatly abused. Philip was so irritated against Elizabeth, for rendering assistance to those whom he deemed his rebellious subjects, that he fitted out the celebrated Armada, consisting of 150 vessels, with a large army and upwards of 2,000 cannon, to invade England.



The fleet sailed from Lisbon, in May, 1588, and met with a tremendous storm, which dispersed and destroyed the greater part of the armament; the English fleet being at sea, followed up their destruction, and fifty vessels only returned to Spain.

In 1609, the northern provinces of the Netherlands threw off the Spanish yoke, but Flanders remained in a state of the most abject subjection; the records of this period again exhibit, in a most striking manner, the awful effects of despotism, superstition, bigotry and cruelty. The once flourishing cities of the Low Countries sunk into insignificance and poverty; several of their populous villages were entirely deserted. Such is said to have been the extent of desolation, that, within a few miles of the cities of Ghent and Brussels, numbers were destroyed by wolves, and other beasts of prey; and Amsterdam engrossed the whole commerce of the country.

If the memorials of the past may be viewed as admonitions for the regulation of the future, the history of the Netherlands offers most momentous instruction. The death of Philip delivered the Low Countries from a tyrant, but it did not alter the political system of Spain; however, in 1609, Barneveldt, grand pensionnaire, on behalf of the States General, signed a truce with that country at the Hague, which acknowledged the independence of the United Provinces. Prince Maurice opposed the plans of Barneveldt, whom the States of Holland protected; they addressed the Prince with strong remonstrances on the violation of their rights: he, nevertheless, arrested Barneveldt and others, and accused them of treason; appointing a commission of twenty-four members, from among their enemies, to try them.



Barneveldt was brought in guilty, but he was so beloved, that his relations were instigated to solicit his pardon; fearing that this would be thought an acknowledgment of his guilt, his wife, with a noble firmness, replied, "I had rather see him suffer innocently, than preserve his life loaded with shame and dishonour." He himself constantly refused any application for pardon, and when urged to it before his execution, answered, "My great age has long since admonished me daily to prepare for this event; I die innocent." When brought to the scaffold, he thus addressed the populace, "Think not, my fellow citizens, that I am a traitor to my country; I have ever conducted myself with integrity, and probity; I die for having defended the liberties of my country." Actuated by filial feelings, the son of Barneveldt conspired the death of Maurice, but was detected and condemned: his mother petitioned for his life. "It appears strange" said the Stat-holder, "that you do for your son, that, which you refused to do for your husband." The widowed mother nobly answered, "I asked no favour for my husband, because he was innocent. I solicit it for my son, because he is guilty."

At the expiration of a twelve years truce which had been agreed to, the war with Spain recommenced. Maurice, weighed down with trouble, died at the age of 58, and was succeeded in 1625, by Frederica Henri, the third Stat-holder; being of a very opposite character to his brother, he became a great General, and by his well-directed enterprises, conquered the Spaniards and ruined their commerce by sea. He devoted himself to the welfare of his country, greatly increased both its domestic and foreign commerce, and founded the University of Utrecht. He was succeeded by William II. who died in 1660.



Charles I. of England received considerable aid during his misfortunes from the States-General. They sent two Ambassadors extraordinary to England, to endeavour to save his life. They arrived in London on the 5th of February, the day on which the Parliament pronounced sentence against him. Their entreaties were without effect, for the following day he suffered on the scaffold.

The death of the Statholder, in 1660, left the States without a General or a Governor; but the birth of William III. eight days after, excited a powerful party in favour of the new-born Prince. A war broke out with England, but peace was signed at Breda in 1667, when the death of Philip IV. of Spain once more involved the Low Countries in war, Louis XIV. pretending that Flanders belonged to him in right of his wife; he conquered it, and also the seven Provinces of Holland, and proposed such ignominious terms of peace, that all eyes were turned towards the House of Orange; the Statholdership was re-established in favour of the Prince of Orange, William III. who in 1679 succeeded in forming a confederacy of the States of Flanders against the oppression of Louis XIV. This alliance was called the Union of Utrecht.

The sovereignty of William III. commenced a new and important era in the history of the United Provinces. He was called by the people of England to occupy the throne which his father-in-law had abdicated, and which increased his powers against Louis XIV.; in 1672, he besieged Namur and took it in eight days, when, after various successes and reverses, he consented to moderate terms of peace, and a treaty was concluded at Ryswick in 1697; but this calm was of short duration. On the 7th of September, 1701, was concluded the celebrated treaty deno-



minated the Grand Alliance between Great Britain and the United Provinces, and the Low Countries became again the theatre of war. The armies of France were commanded by the Duke of Burgundy and Marshal Bouffler and those of the Allies by the Duke of Marlborough, and Prince Eugene, the history of this war presents a series of disasters on the side of the French, and of successes on the part of the allies. In 1704 the allied armies gained a complete victory, when Marshal Tallard was made prisoner, with about 12,000 men at Hochstert. After the battle of Ramillies, in 1706, the victors advanced upon Louvain and Brussels, which cities immediately surrendered their keys, and the French were driven out of Flanders.

After the battle of Ramillies, Louvain, Brussels, Malines, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, and other considerable parts of the Austrian Low Countries fell into the hands of the Allies, the Queen of Great Britain and the States General of the United Provinces, formed, in July, 1706, a Council of State, for the regulation of the Finances, and the administration of their Laws and Government. In 1702, May 21st, Philip the V. of Spain, was inaugurated at Brussels, as Duke of Lothier, of Brabant, and of Limbourg: and on the 2d of June, he changed the form of Government. The chamber of the Count of Flanders was united to that of Brabant, under the same President; but by the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, the southern Provinces of the Netherlands were once more placed under the dominion of the House of Austria. A treaty in 1713 was also concluded between the Emperor, the States General, and Great Britain, in which reciprocal engagements were entered into for mutual defence. On the death of Charles VI. in 1740, the Archduchess Maria Theresa succeeded to the government of the Low Countries. In the following year they



were over-run by the French, under Louis XV. but were restored to Austria in 1748, at the instance of Holland and England. Brussels, after being besieged, was taken possession of by the French, and held by them during three years,

On the death of Charles VI. Maria Theresa found herself heir to the vast dominions of the House of Austria, including the kingdoms of Hungary, Bohemia, Silesia, Suabia, Austria, Milan, the Duchies of Parma, of Plaisance, and of the Low Countries. Her education and abilities, together with her amiable disposition, inspired those anticipations of her future character, which were fully realized. Historians speak of her as impressed with correct views of humanity and religion, and as a model for sovereigns. At fourteen years of age she was admitted to the Chamber of Council, where she gave great proofs of her sagacity. At an early period of her reign she found herself involved in a war with other powers, contrary to the faith of treaties. Forced to fly from Vienna, she escaped with her young child, then a few months old, without retinue, and threw herself on the protection of her Hungarian subjects, who armed in her defence with alacrity; and the plains of Germany became deluged in blood. When threatened with the loss of her dominions, and fearing for the welfare of her children, with calm composure she observed—"My God permits it, and I have no right to murmur." This confidence was not disappointed, she succeeded in placing her husband on the Imperial throne. He was crowned Emperor at Frankfort, and at length re-entered Vienna covered with laurels, amidst the blessings of his subjects.

In 1742 Great Britain assisted the Low Countries with troops and money to oppose the arms of France, but the



rebellion which broke out in England in 1745 occasioned the recall of the troops.

In 1746 Louis XV. succeeded in taking Brussels, the citadel of Antwerp, and, afterwards, Bergen-op-Zoom, one of the strongest fortresses in Europe; but after many severe battles, a treaty of peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle. Maria Theresa proceeded immediately to take measures to increase the happiness of her subjects; she was so exemplary in her private life, as to excite the ridicule of some of the licentious wits of that period.—“Tell me not,” she observed “of those learned philosophers, who “would sacrifice their belief for an epigram, and who pretend to possess that infallibility themselves, which they “refuse to the Church.” On another occasion she observed to Cardinal Strautsen, Archbishop of Vienna—“It “is necessary if we would exhibit the deity in our own “characters, to practise ourselves that which we require of “others.”

Continental politics are as uncertain and variable as the wind. Maria Theresa soon found herself again plunged in war; but whether in war or peace her conduct was regulated by such correct principles, that it procured her universal respect. Possessing enlarged views of toleration, she granted to the Protestants the free exercise of their religion throughout her dominions, and abolished in the Catholic system many of those feasts and fasts which entrench so greatly on human industry and happiness. What few hours of leisure she could obtain, she employed in the perusal of works of solid literature. In benevolence, and in the duties of piety she most excelled.

“Education,” she observed, is an edifice, which it is



“necessary to raise on religion, as a foundation. I had rather that my children should cease to reign, than that they should be bad Christians.” The patronage which she gave to every institution, tending to promote learning, science, and humanity, immortalizes her name. In 1777 she established a Royal Commission to inspect all the colleges and benevolent societies throughout the Low Countries. She died in 1780, greatly beloved and regretted.

In this abstract of the History of the Netherlands, you will perceive how closely it is united with that of the several countries which have from time to time contended for it, with which reflection I conclude this letter.

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## LETTER X.

BRUSSELS.

FOR a considerable time the Low Countries had enjoyed tranquillity, when Joseph II. came to the throne of Germany. Possessing views of toleration and religious principles too enlarged for his subjects, he suppressed the several religious orders of Monks and Nuns; justly considering all such institutions as hostile to the true interests of society; and, by an Edict in 1783, he abolished the remains of servitude, or villanage, and the use of torture throughout his dominions. He forbid all religious processions and pilgrimages, prohibited pompous burials and rich offerings, and despoiled the images of saints of all their costly ornaments. He also disclaimed all secular subjection to the Pope, and in 1786, at an assembly of the ecclesiastical princes, at



Ratisbon, resolved to withdraw from his jurisdiction. He was a great encourager of learning and science, and a liberal patron of genius.

In 1783 he suppressed twelve convents and monasteries in Brussels only. The clergy, alarmed, as might be expected, raised the cry of sacrilege, announcing that the emperor intended to destroy all religion, and thus succeeded in stirring up and fomenting strong discontent.

When he attempted to abolish the University of Louvain, and substitute in its stead a college, where all the ecclesiastics should be compelled to become instructors, they thundered forth against him the most violent invectives, and he found it necessary to employ military force to maintain his authority. The Archbishop of Malines was ordered to Vienna; the Pope's nuncio received orders to quit Brussels, and the superior of the Capuchins was banished for having refused to send his noviciates to the new school of theology. The people considered the priests as martyrs suffering for the faith, and the emperor as the author of their calamities. He undertook also to change the form of government: he suppressed the permanent committee of the delegates of the states, abolished the courts of justice and the tribunals, proclaimed the Low Countries to be simply provinces of the Austrian monarchy, divided them into nine circles, and placed over them governors independent of the several states. This entire subversion of their civil and religious codes aroused general indignation. The states of Brabant assembled, refused all subsidies to the emperor, suppressed the college of Louvain, and presenting the strongest remonstrances, called upon the neighbouring states for their aid, which was immediately granted. A national cockade was adopted,



and, with arms in their hands, the people seized on several of the governors.

At this period Joseph was engaged in a war against the Turks : irritated at this resistance to his edicts, he commanded that a deputation from the states of Flanders and Brabant should make known their complaints ; he agreed, that if they would lay down their arms, grant the subsidies, and annul their acts, he would re-establish the tribunals, maintain their ancient rights, and suppress the seminary at Louvain. Not satisfied with these concessions, the states insisted upon the full redress of their grievances, and, pressed by his wars against the Turks, he yielded to their wishes. New governors were appointed, and peace and tranquillity were restored. Policy seems to have influenced the emperor in these proceedings. He began gradually to augment his armies in the Low Countries, changed or removed all the civil authorities who had resisted his ordinances, and at length attempted again to re-model the supreme court of Brabant, and re-establish the seminary of Louvain. These measures produced new murmurings, and Count Trantmansdorff suspended for three months carrying them into execution ; he then obtained the subsidies which he demanded. The emperor persisting in his resolutions, the Count commanded the college to be shut up, and when the council of Brabant was assembled, he communicated the Emperor's commands, allowed them two hours only for deliberation, and threatened to revoke every former concession if they persisted, and the council was thus compelled to register the edict of the Emperor, although greatly against its consent.

An Austrian patrole having been insulted, fired upon the offenders ; sixteen were killed, and several wounded,



and the inhabitants flew to arms. The emperor recalled to Vienna the officer who had given orders to fire upon the people, and decreed an amnesty for the past. After continual but ineffectual attempts, on the part of the Emperor, to carry his plans into execution, the states of Hainault and of Brabant refused the subsidies; at length the governors were arrested; the Austrian soldiers attacked and pillaged the houses of the magistrates, which led to open hostilities, and terminated in their throwing off the Austrian yoke. The states of Brabant declared themselves independent, and formed themselves into a confederation, which took the name of the "United States of Belgium."

Exhausted by anxiety and disappointment, the emperor was attacked by a dangerous disease, when he received intelligence of the insurrections in the Low Countries. Tears escaped from his eyes, at the thoughts of all his favourite ideas of reform being treated with indignation; and, by the advice of the Comte de Kaunitz, his sage counsellor in affliction, he met the insurgents and endeavoured to appease them, but too late; they were armed with power; all negociation was disdained, and the Netherlands refused all further subjection. A little before his death, he thus addressed the Prince de Ligne:—"Your country has destroyed me--the capture of Ghent has distressed me--and Brussels abandoned has killed me. I die: I must have been a stoic not to feel it. Go: endeavour to bring the people back to their allegiance. If you cannot succeed, remember you have children--do not sacrifice your own interest to your attachment to me." He expired a few days after, in February, 1796, having previously written for himself the following epitaph:--

*"Here lies Joseph II. unfortunate in all his undertakings."*



Read carefully the life of Joseph II.--it abounds with most valuable instruction. His motives appear to have been pure; he seems to have been educated in the school of wisdom, but to have fallen on evil days. He viewed himself as the father of his people, and the Belgians have reason to regret that they resisted him in the execution of plans which would have emancipated them from those fetters of priestcraft which hold them in the most abject bondage. He displayed, during his short reign, considerable talent: he may be said to have been wanting in sound judgment, and in apportioning his means to his ends. In one of his journeys to the Netherlands, he gained the affections of the Belgians by his gentleness and courtesy, his readiness to listen to their complaints, and also, by the steps which he took, on all occasions, to increase their commerce, and promote their real welfare.

Previous to his accession to the throne, the gates of a superb promenade at Vienna, called the Prater, were opened only to persons of distinction. Joseph wished that it should be made public, and caused these words to be inscribed over the entrance--"Place of amusement, a treasure accessible to all." The nobility expostulated, that it would be no longer fit for their enjoyment, if the vulgar were thus suffered to profane it. Joseph replied, "If I were determined to associate with none but my equals, I must enter into the vaults of the monastery of the Capuchins, where my ancestors repose. I love men because they are men; I make no other distinction among them, and have no other preference than what is due to their actions. Whoever thinks well and acts honourably is entitled to my esteem. It must not be exclusively reserved for those who reckon none but princes among their ancestors."



On another occasion, a crime having been committed by a person of distinction, whose friends applied for a mitigation of punishment, the Emperor replied, "The law must be executed on all individuals equally. He who did not blush to commit the offence should not blush to expiate it. If the law admitted of any difference in the chastisement allotted to the same species of offence, the indulgence ought not to be extended to those who have the fewest excuses to offer. Besides, virtuous and honourable actions being the more meritorious in the lower lower classes, where one may presume that education is least carefully attended to, and the greatest privations are felt, they ought to be the more highly recompensed in the humbler walks of life.

On the death of Joseph II. Leopold succeeded to the throne, and had great difficulty to re-establish the Austrian authority in the Netherlands. Belgium became distracted by two parties. The aristocratic, who, when they had reinstated the clergy in all their rights and immunities, and secured the nobility, shewed no further concern. Well satisfied to have the States General under their influence, from whence all laws issued, and possessing the entire patronage and distribution of all favours, they asserted, that the people ought to be satisfied and contented, provided the clergy enjoyed their riches, dignities and prerogatives; but the popish party demanded the convocation of the general assembly of the states.

The revolution in France was at this time making rapid progress, and the democratic party received from that country, the most positive assurances of assistance; the army being inclined to favour it, named for their commander Vander Mersch, who, when the aristocratic party



dispatched their troops against him, was deserted by his followers; he was arrested and conducted prisoner to the citadel of Antwerp, which caused great discontent in Flanders. Leopold profited by these dispositions to re-establish the Austrian authority by sending 30,000 men into Flanders. He offered to the Belgians to re-establish their laws and government as they existed in the time of Maria Theresa, *with some slight modifications*, if before the 21st of Nov. 1790, they would return to their allegiance. On their hesitating, he crossed the Meuse with his troops, entered Namur, and Belgium submitted to him. He then issued a general amnesty, and swore to maintain all the privileges which they had enjoyed previous to the reign of Joseph II.

From this period, the Netherlands became the theatre of a most sanguinary war. The armies of the powers coalesced against France, assembled their forces, and Dumourier, the commander of the French, over-run the Netherlands with astonishing rapidity. The elements seemed to favour his plans, rivers which had not been frozen over for many years, were so hard, that they afforded the greatest facilities for passing his troops. The Austrians bombarded Lisle for twenty-eight days without success. Dumourier relieved it, attacked and defeated the Imperial army at Genappe, which gave him possession of Belgium to the river Roer. The Belgians praised his valour, and regarded him as their liberator; but whatever esteem the French armies excited by their successes, was destroyed by the devastations which they committed. The persons appointed to conduct their commissariat department, manifested the most unprincipled rapacity; public and private property was seized upon, and the treasures of the churches were ransacked. They pillaged the corn of the peasants and sent it into France. Thus, by a continued series of acts, which openly violated every principle of private right, they



created a strong party in favour of the Austrian Government.

In 1794, Flanders again became the scene of most severe conflicts. The Austrian and British forces took possession of Valenciennes and Condé, and appeared before Dunkirk. The French pushed on and besieged Charleroi, and a second time conquered Belgium, driving the allied troops beyond the Rhine. The Netherlands were once more attached to France, formed into nine departments, and declared to be an integral part of the French empire. The Emperor renounced all claims to them at the treaty of Campo Formio, in 1797. Napoleon abdicated first time, April 6, 1814.--Conveyed to Elba, May 8, 1814. Vienna congress met, Dec. 1814--broke up, June 7, 1815. Napoleon escaped, March 1, 1815--entered France on the 8th--Paris, 20th.

The more recent events must be so fresh in recollection, and are so interwoven with the history of the French Revolution, that you will deem a detail of them unnecessary; suffice it to say, that, in 1815, Belgium was separated from France, by the congress at Vienna, which in the 66th article, declares, that the United Provinces of Holland and the more southern Belgic Provinces, together with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, shall form under the Prince of Orange Nassau, the kingdom of the Netherlands.

Thus have I furnished you with a short abstract of the history of Belgium, which, at different periods has been so intimately intervoven with that of Holland, or the Seven United Provinces, that I found it difficult to draw with accuracy the line of demarcation. If it be at all politic for Great Britain to form any continental alliances, there



can be no hesitation in admitting that the Netherlands, under its present protestant government, is its proper and natural ally.

Born and bred a Briton, and educated in the most enlarged notions of rational freedom, I speak the sentiments of every lover of his country, if I conclude this letter by expressing a most ardent wish that the present family may long continue to reign over these realms in the full enjoyment of peace and prosperity; making the general happiness the great aim of its government, and receiving in return the affections of a brave and free people.

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## LETTER XII.

BRUSSELS.

WITHOUT further researches into the history of this country, I shall proceed to inform you of the nature of the present government, and of the constitution of the Netherlands, erected into a monarchy, by the treaty at the Hague, August 19, 1815.

The kingdom of the Netherlands was declared by the congress at Vienna to be composed of North and South Brabant, Limbourg, Gueldres, Liege, East and West Flanders, Hainault, Holland, Zealand, Namur, Antwerp, Utrecht, Frise, Overysse, Groningen and Drenthe. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, was placed under the same sovereignty as the kingdom of the Netherlands, and made subject to the same fundamental laws, excepting as to its relations with the German confederation.



The crown of the Netherlands is declared hereditary in his royal highness William Frederick, Prince of Orange, and his legitimate descendants; and in defect of male issue, the crown is to descend in the female line. The king of the Netherlands cannot accept of any other crown, nor can the seat of government be removed out of the kingdom.

The king possesses a revenue of 2,400,000 florins, equal to about 200,000 pounds of English money, with an addition of 100,000 florins for the expenses of palaces. He is not restrained from extending this if he thinks proper. The king has the sole direction of the relations with foreign powers; chooses his own ministers; ratifies all treaties or conventions; directs the forces by sea and land, and appoints his own officers. He has the supreme direction of the finances; controuls the colleges and universities; regulates the coinage; confers titles of nobility; grants pardons; and sanctions or rejects the propositions made to him by the States General. He appoints the council of state, which is composed of twenty-four members from the various provinces over which he presides; the Prince of Orange sitting there in his own right.

The house of Orange traces its lineage from some of the families which accompanied Julius Cæsar to his conquests in Gaul. The house of Nassau was one of the most noble families of ancient Germany. Adolphus, Count of Nassau, died in 703. Adolphus of Nassau, was elected Emperor in 1292. William VIII. of Nassau Dellenbourg, son of William the elder, possessed the principality of Orange in virtue of the will of Rene, his cousin, and was acknowledged by Henry II. king of France, in 1559.



William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, became king of England, Scotland and Ireland, at the revolution in 1688, having married Mary Stuart, daughter of the Duke of York, afterwards James II. of England.

William Frederick, Prince of Orange Nassau, the present king of the Netherlands, was born Aug. 24, 1772, and married Oct. 1, 1791, Frederica Louisa Wilhelmina of Prussia. Of this marriage were born William Frederick George Louis, Prince of Orange, on the 6th of December, 1792; William Frederick Charles, February 24, 1797; Wilhelmina Frederica Louisa Charlotte Marianne, 9th May, 1810.

The Prince of Orange married, Feb. 21, 1816, Anna Paulowna, grand duchess, and sister of the emperor of Russia, born January 18, 1793, by whom he has issue, two sons.

The kingdom of the Netherlands receives ministers from foreign states, to which also it sends ambassadors; Monsieur le Baron H. Fagel is appointed ambassador extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the court of Great Britain, and the Earl of Clancarty is the minister from Great Britain.

The king maintains a court, attended by the usual officers of state, with separate households for the Queen and Prince of Orange. He holds a cabinet council and also a council of state occasionally, and a levee on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Such Englishmen who have been presented at their own court in England, are entitled, on producing authentic documents thereof, to presentation at any of the continental courts. Those who have not had



that advantage, whether English or natives of other countries, and who wish to be presented, will find it necessary to obtain the introduction of the ambassador of their respective courts. Here is also an herald's office, to register the titles of nobility, to arrange the ceremonies of all public entries and state processions.

The Netherlands have experienced very considerable changes in their forms of government, having become subject, in succession, to Spanish, Austrian, French and Dutch authorities: but, with the exception of some few short intervals, they have uniformly possessed a considerable portion of rational freedom, to maintain which they have, from time to time, been found nobly and successfully struggling against tyranny and oppression.

The king has, by an edict, dated 30th April, 1815, established the order of William, as a reward of valour and military services rendered to the sovereign and the country. The monarch is perpetual grand master. This order is composed of four grand cross knights-commandants and knights of the third and fourth classes; the insignia of which consists of a white cross and the crown enamelled with eight corners of pearls and set in gold, inscribed—"Voor Moed, Beleid, Brouw."—"Valour, Prudence, Loyalty." There is attached to this order also the cross of Burgundy, composed of branches of laurel, with garlands of the same encircling a W.

The States General have also, on the proposition of his Majesty, created the civil order of the Belgic Lion; designed to distinguish, in an honourable manner, all those subjects of his Majesty, who have given proofs of their patriotism, zeal and fidelity in fulfilling their duties as citizens, or of



extraordinary abilities in arts and sciences. The King is the perpetual grand master.

This order is divided into three classes. Those of the first class bear the title of Grand Cross Knights, the 2nd of commandants, and the third that of knights only. The appointments rest solely with the King as grand master. The insignia consists of an enamelled white cross, having a gold W. between each of its branches, and bearing an escutcheon of blue enamel, with this motto in gold—"Virtus Nobilitat."—"Virtue ennobles," and on the reverse the Belgic lion, placed as an escutcheon in the arms of the kingdom, surmounted by the royal crown in gold. The ribbon is blue of Nassau, with two stripes of orange. The brethren of this order enjoy, from the time of their election, an annual pension of two hundred florins, of which, the half, in case of their decease, is continued to their widows during life. This order, when once conferred, is only lost by a sentence of disgrace.

There is no more powerful way of appealing to the human heart than by taking an interest in its concerns; by thus distinguishing valour, fidelity, virtue, and genius with honours which are equally open to all who may merit them, the Sovereign will range all true hearts around him, ready on all occasions to stand forward in his defence. This was the talisman which, with magic power, enabled Napoleon to encircle himself with heroes, exhibiting attachments to the extent of which, the history of the world affords no example.

His Majesty, the king of the Netherlands is one of the knights of the order of the garter; both of which are British honours.



The States General are composed of two chambers, and represent the nation. The one which is denominated the first, or upper chamber, is composed of not less than forty, nor exceeding sixty members, named by the King for life, from among those who have been most distinguished by their birth, fortune or the services which they have rendered the state. The king nominates their president, and each member receives 3000 florins annually, to defray travelling expences, in attending the court.

The other chamber is composed of one hundred and ten members, named by the States of the Provinces. Persons who live in the Province which has the appointment, and who are not less than thirty years of age are eligible to be candidates. They are elected for three years, and one-third of the whole number annually retire, but are immediately eligible to be re-elected. Their president is named by the King for one session only. These members receive annually 2,500 florins for the expences of removing to attend the King, either at the Hague or Brussels where the sittings are held. This plan is not dissimilar to that adopted formerly in England.

Each of these chambers bears the title of "Nobles, et puissant Seigneurs;" they are required to assemble, at least, once in every year, when called together by the King. The regular session commences the third Monday in October, but the King has power to call extraordinary sittings at his pleasure. In times of peace these sittings are to be held alternately in the Northern and Southern provinces of the kingdom. On the death of the King they are required to assemble without being summoned. The sessions are opened and closed in one of the chambers of deliberation, by the king in person, or by commission. All



resolutions are passed by a majority of votes ; no motion can be passed unless half the members of the assembly are present, and, in such cases, when, by the fundamental law the two assemblies unite, the members sit together without distinction. The legislative power is exercised jointly by the King and the States General ; the King communicates to the second chamber, either by a message or by a commission, his reasons for bringing forward any motion.

The sittings of the second chamber are public: if it approves and adopts the motion, it is forwarded in due form. If rejected, notice is given to the King in the following words : “ The second chamber of the States General testify to the King their zeal for the welfare of the kingdom ; and they most respectfully solicit him to take the proposition into his ulterior consideration.” The first chamber possesses the same right of rejection. The second chamber only possesses the right to originate any proposition to the King for the deliberation of the States General, which, when they have determined upon, they send it up to the first chamber, and, if they agree to it, they forward it to the King for his consent. When the King adopts the resolutions of the States General, he replies—*Le Roi consent*, if he rejects them, he replies—*Le Roi deliberera*.

If experience should make any change necessary in the fundamental laws of the realm, the necessity thereof shall be previously announced ; but no alteration can take place without the consent of two-thirds of the members of the States General. The first change in the second chamber took place on the 3d Oct. 1817, when one-third of the members retired, and the new members took their seats.

A minister of state is appointed for the direction of all



the Hydraulic works, as the dykes, sea-ports, rivers, water-courses, bridges, mines, colleges, palaces and public buildings; he is called the minister of Waterstraadt.

Justice is administered in all cases in the name of the King. Here is a supreme tribunal, which bears the name of the high court of judicature, and of which the members are chosen, as much as possible, from the several provinces. The high court informs the second chamber of the States General, when any vacancy occurs, and the king fills the vacancy from three lists given him by the states.

The members of the States General and the administration, the counsellors of state and the commissioners of the King, in the several provinces, are members of this high court by virtue of their functions.

This court presides in the administration of justice throughout the realm; examines whether the other tribunals have justly applied the laws; and either annuls or confirms their judgment.

There are also courts of justice for the several provinces, which take cognizance of civil affairs only.

The king names to the vacancies amongst the judges in these courts, from a triple list presented to him by the Provincial States.

The King has recently, by virtue of the authority vested in him, banished the editors of several French newspapers, viz. *Le Constitutionnel*, printed at Antwerp, of *Le Vrai Libéral*, printed at Brussels, and of the *Journal De La Flandre*, printed at Ghent. When the manner in which these have



been conducted, is considered, this is not to be wondered at; they have been edited, by discontented refugees with great hostility to the reigning government, and a malignant antipathy to the British nation.

David, the celebrated French artist, is permitted to remain in this city, and Cambaceres the ci-devant consul, may be seen daily taking his walk in the park. The Abbé Sieyes has been a long time here also, living in a retired manner—but many of the French emigrants have been ordered to quit the kingdom.

The councils of war, or a high tribunal, take cognizance of all offences, military or naval, committed on land, or on the seas.

There are in the Southern Provinces, and will continue to be, until the judicial organization, which is to compose the basis of the new constitution, now under consideration, is completed, two superior courts, one at Brussels, and the other at Liege. The jurisdiction of the former extends over the Southern Provinces of Brabant, east and west Flanders, Hainault and Antwerp, and the latter over Liege, Namur, Limbourg and Luxembourg.

These superior courts are empowered to decide finally, upon the appeals brought before them from the provincial courts, and also upon the appeals brought before them from the tribunals of commerce. The decrees of the superior courts must be given by not less than five of the judges.

The superior courts are empowered to take cognizance of criminal matters, as well as of those of police generally. The assize courts are composed of a president and four



assistants. The special courts are composed of a president and four counsellors. There is in each principal town a chamber of commerce, which takes cognizance of commercial causes only.

The code Napoleon, with some modifications, particularly in reference to divorce, (the divorced parties not being allowed to marry again), is at present in force in Belgium; but a commission has been appointed to organise a code of laws adapted to the genius and habits of the people, in which very considerable progress has been made. Criminal justice is administered exclusively by the provincial courts, and such other criminal tribunals will be established as shall be found necessary.

The judges in the high court of judicature, in the provincial civil courts, and in the criminal courts, have their appointments for life.

In the chambers of commerce, merchants are the judges; experience may, perhaps, hereafter make it apparent that they would act better as jurymen, as in England, where the verdict of a special jury is seldom complained of, even by the unsuccessful party.

The person of the king is inviolable; the ministers are alone responsible for mal-administration. All arbitrary arrests are forbidden; the judges are independent; all judicial sentences must be pronounced in public with the reasons on which they are founded. In criminal cases trial by jury formerly existed, but is now abolished; the bench of judges decide after hearing the pleadings and the evidence.

It is impossible to read this abstract of the nature of the



constitution, laws, and government of this country, without perceiving that they in many instances modelled after those of Great Britain, even to great exactness; in some respects the Sovereign possesses more power than the King of England.

I shall conclude this subject in my next.

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#### LETTER XIV.

#### BRUSSELS.

To resume the subject, the house of every person is declared to be inviolable: the liberty of the press is acknowledged, but the author is considered liable as in Britain to an action, if he injures another, or traduces the government of any foreign state; and the laws against slander are enforced with great strictness. Debts or claims not exceeding one hundred francs are sued for before the juges de paix, who are appointed for each section, and appear to decide causes with great impartiality. But no claim can be heard unless the claimant has previously taken out a patent.

No imprisonment for debt is allowed, except on bills; the creditor is obliged to make the prisoner an allowance in advance. In one of the large prisons in Brussels only five debtors were confined, and they are kept distinct from the other criminals; a process for debt may be issued speedily against property, the natives possess advantages against foreigners greater than against native subjects.



Great complaints are made, but with what degree of reason I cannot accurately judge, of many of the legal decisions; and in particular, that the contending parties are permitted to have intercourse with the judges pending a cause—a mode which cannot be too strongly reprobated as subversive of all justice.

Duke Jean III. in 1323, or thereabouts, granted to the citizens of Brussels the following privileges, which they still enjoy.—“ Their persons nor their goods cannot be seized without the order of the Sheriffs.—A citizen of Brussels cannot be imprisoned but in the city itself.—No one can arrest a citizen except the *Amman* or his *sergens*.—A foreigner arrested by a citizen of Brussels for debt cannot be released without the free consent of the creditor or the order of the Sheriffs.—The goods of parents cannot be confiscated for the crimes of their children.”

The king's proclamation from the Hague, July 18, 1815, tends to throw further light on this interesting subject, and powerfully evinces the parental feelings which actuate him as the sovereign of this country.

WE, William, by the Grace of GOD, King of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange Nassau, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, etc.

When the government of Belgium was given into our hands by the high allied powers, we had previously given our formal adhesion to the union of Belgium with the United Provinces of the Netherlands, which had been agreed upon at London by the plenipotentiaries of the said powers, in the month of June, 1814, and of which the following is the tenor:—



ART. 1. This union is to be intimate and complete, so that the two countries shall form one and the same state, governed by the constitution already established in Holland, which shall be modified by common consent, according to the new state of things.

2. No innovation shall be made in the articles of this constitution, which ensure equal favour and protection to all forms of worship, and guarantee the admission of all citizens to public offices and employments, whatever be their religious creeds.

3. The Belgian provinces are represented in the assembly of the States General, whose ordinary sittings in time of peace shall be held alternately in a town in Holland and in a town in Belgium.

4. All the inhabitants of the Netherlands, being thus constitutionally assimilated among each other, the several provinces shall equally enjoy all the commercial and other advantages, of which their respective situations are susceptible; nor can any obstacle or restriction be laid upon one, to the advantage of the other.

5. Immediately after the union, the provinces and towns of Belgium shall be admitted to the commerce and navigation of the colonies, upon the same footing as the provinces and towns of Holland.

6. As the burdens must be in common as well as the advantages, the debts contracted till the time of the union, by the Dutch provinces on the one hand, and by the Belgic provinces on the other, shall be chargeable to the public treasury of the Netherlands.



7. Conformably to the same principles, the expences required, for the establishment and preservation of the fortresses on the frontiers of the new state, shall be borne by the public treasury, as resulting from an object that interests the safety and independence of all the provinces of the whole nation.

8. The expence of forming and keeping up the dykes shall be for the account of the districts more especially interested in this branch of the public service, reserving the obligation of the state in general, to furnish aid in case of extraordinary disasters, all, exactly as has been hitherto practised in Holland.

The treaty of Vienna having since confirmed, upon these principles, the cession of the Belgic provinces, forming, in conjunction with the United Provinces of the Netherlands, one kingdom, we have hastened to appoint a special committee to examine what modifications it would be useful or necessary to make in the constitution already established in Holland. Citizens distinguished by their knowledge, their patriotism and their probity, have employed themselves on this important work, with a zeal worthy of the greatest praise. The project which they have just laid before us, contains honourable distinctions for the nobility; insures to all forms of worship, equal favour and protection, and guarantees the admission of all citizens to public offices and employments; it fixes the division of power, upon the basis of protecting institutions, which have been at all times dear to the people of Belgium. It recognizes, above all things, the independence of the judicial power; it reconciles the integrity and the strength of the body politic with the individual right of each of its members, and lastly, it contains the elements



of every gradual improvement, which experience and further study may deem necessary. However, before we proceed to introduce the new fundamental law, we desire to convince ourselves of the assent of our subjects to its principal regulations. For this purpose, deputies (notables) shall be assembled from every arrondissement, in the proportion of one for two thousand inhabitants. We have ordered that the choice shall be made with impartiality, among the persons most estimable, and most worthy of the confidence of their fellow citizens. But in order to be certain that our intentions in this respect have been fulfilled, and that those who are going to be named deputies, are really deserving the honour of being the organs of the general opinion; we further order that the lists shall be published and deposited for eight days in the chief towns of the respective districts. At the same time registers shall be opened, in which every inhabitant, who is the head of a family, may come and insert a simple vote of rejection of one or more of the deputies named. It is according to the result which these registers shall afford, that the lists will be finally determined on, and the notables convoked in each arrondissement to vote upon the plan of the fundamental law which will be laid before them. Each of these assemblages shall send its *proces verbaux* to Brussels, and shall depute three of its members to attend in a general meeting at the opening of these *proces verbaux*, (journals of proceedings) and at the collecting of the votes of the notables. Such, Belgians, are the measures which we have judged most proper for the establishment of a compact, which is to fix your destinies, and to hasten the moment when your sovereign will be surrounded by a representation loyally constituted. Happy to reign over a free, brave and industrious people, we are sure of finding in it that character for loyalty and frank-



ness which has always so eminently distinguished it. All our efforts will be directed to cement the foundations of its prosperity and glory, and the citizens of all classes, and all the provinces shall have in us, a benevolent and impartial protector of their rights and their welfare. In particular, we guarantee to the catholic church its establishment and its liberties, and we shall not lose sight of the example and moderation, in this respect, which have been left us by our predecessors, your ancient sovereigns, whose memory is so justly revered among you.

Given at the Hague, July 15, 1815, and the second year of our reign.

(Signed)  
By the King.

WILLIAM.

For the Secretary of State, in his absence, the Cabinet Secretary.

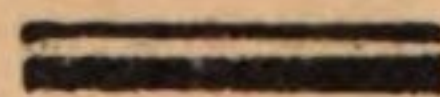
(Signed)

P. DE CROMBRUGGE.

(A true Copy.)

The Clerk to the Secretary of State.

L. VAN GOBBELSCHROY.



In all public punishments, such as the pillory and the guillotine, for both are in use here, the name of the delinquent, and the nature of his crime, are written conspicuously, and placed over the head of the sufferer, a custom derived probably from the Romans.



Governors are appointed over the several provinces, who, in their absence, are represented by vice-presidents, chosen from among the members of the states of the particular province. Registers of all public occurrences are kept and transmitted regularly to the government.

In the administration of the country are included two ministers of state, appointed to take cognizance of every thing relating to the concerns of religion and education. M. J. P. Charlier is the president of the Protestant Consistory at Brussels; M. Goedkoop holds the same situation at Ghent, and M. Winkel at Antwerp. Messieurs Pauw and Rika are appointed the resident Protestant ministers at Brussels.

Shakspeare observes, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown;" and experience proves the truth of the remark. It must be evident that to sway the sceptre of the Netherlands at this crisis is not unattended with difficulty, the more so, divided as it is, and likely to continue to be some time to come, into political and religious parties. But that moderation, wisdom and firmness which the King has shewn on all occasions, cannot fail to conciliate all hearts, and to obtain for him that reward—the affections of his people—which the general tenor of his administration tends to inspire.

When a review is taken of the two countries over which he is appointed to reign, the difficulty becomes apparent. Holland has long been distinguished as a Protestant country; Belgium as professing the Catholic faith. The Belgians have assumed to hold the character of the Dutch in an undeserved degree of contempt, and a rooted antipathy has long subsisted between the two countries:—to that



antipathy is now added a jealousy, which views with a jaundiced eye every mark of distinction that is given, and thus calls for the exercise of the utmost discretion, decision and firmness.

I purpose, in my next, to hand you some observations relating to the present state of religion in this country.

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## LETTER XV.

BRUSSELS.

OUR Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, commands us, "That we judge not that we be not judged." Although he intends to teach us an enlarged principle of toleration and good will to man, he cannot mean to encourage a spirit of lukewarmness and indifference to truth, and particularly to religious truth as of all the most important. He cautions us, however, that whilst with due diligence and humble reliance on divine direction, we search to inform our minds what is right, and with a firm and decisive step to walk therein, and even to guide others into the same path, over whom our influence extends; nevertheless, he forbids us to assume the seat of judgement, which belongs only to himself; and admonishes us against dealing out anathemas against those who differ from us. In such remarks I have to make on the religion of this country, I shall endeavour to pursue this line of conduct.

It is not ascertained at what period christianity was first promulgated in Belgium. Some writers are of opinion that it was introduced about the year 270, under the



pontificate of Denis, and was brought to Tournay by Piat and Chrysolus, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Dioclesian; and it is stated, that after the Vandals had ravaged Germany with fire and sword, Nicause, Liogenes, and many others, suffered martyrdom here, about the year 400.

Some writers indeed maintain, that St. Nazaire, a Roman, who suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Nero, was the first who introduced Christianity into Belgium; others think that Egiste, one of the seventy-two disciples of Christ, was sent by Peter into Frise, and again others assert, that Pope Everiste, about the year 112, converted the people of this country from paganism. Amongst so many opinions it is difficult to decide. Strong symptoms for a reformation in religion, similar to that which took place in Germany in the sixteenth century, discovered themselves at a very early period in the Low Countries. In 752, there was a great disturbance at Ghent, occasioned by the introduction of images in religious processions. In 1135, many persons were martyred at Utrecht and other places for what were deemed their heretical opinions; and, in 1536, William Tindal, an Englishman, who had translated the Bible into his native language, was arrested at Antwerp, strangled, and burnt at Vilvorde. There is sufficient proof that in the middle ages the priests founded monasteries with considerable endowments; but their lives appear to have been in direct opposition to their professions.

Charlemagne, who died in 813, granted to the bishops of Cologne, Utrecht, and Liege, the sovereignty over their several districts.

From ecclesiastical history we learn that in the twelfth



century a great number of the persecuted Piedmontese Protestants or Waldenses fled, and settled about Cologne and the several cities of Flanders.

In the sixteenth century, the principles of the Reformation obtained considerable influence in Belgium; religious animosities were enkindled, and produced the most dreadful effects: for nearly four years the Catholic worship was suppressed in Brussels, and the images were broken and destroyed; but the partizans of that persuasion at length prevailed, and a number of the Protestants suffered martyrdom. The first confession of faith, drawn up by the Protestants in the Low Countries, was in 1561.

By the frequent recurrence of feasts, ceremonies, and processions, the public mind and feeling are kept in a state of constant excitement. Every morning two or three priests and sometimes more, perform service in their respective churches; each parish has its particular celebrations; and besides the several annual magnificent processions, which have a powerful effect upon the multitude, scarcely a week passes without some pageantry to excite the devotions of the pious, and contributions from the wealthy. Among the principal processions which take place in Brussels—one is on the first Sunday after trinity, called *Le fête Dieu*, and another on the *Sacrament des Miracles*, in the month of July.

Happily for the interests of the country, and of the world, an enlarged and liberal spirit of toleration now prevails. The divine author of Christianity, when upon earth, most clearly and positively distinguished and separated spiritual from temporal concerns. Governments have no right to domineer, nor even to interfere in matters of religion,



unless by overt acts, under the mask of religion, the state is endangered: over opinions they can have no control. In 1515, the Diet of Augsbourg recognized this maxim by an edict, which declared that *all* the inhabitants of the German empire should be allowed to judge for themselves in religious matters, and to join themselves to that church, whose doctrine and worship they thought purest and the most consonant with christianity; and that all those who should injure or persecute any person under religious pretences, or on account of their opinions, should be declared and proceeded against as public enemies of the empire, as invaders of liberty, and as disturbers of the peace. In the report of Lord Macartney's embassy to China, published under the sanction, and partly at the expense, of the British government, this axiom is also fully recognized, as appears by the following extract: "The progress of the doctrines of Fo, is not obstructed by any measures of the government of the country, which does not meddle with mere opinions, it prohibits no belief, which is not supposed to affect the tranquillity of society; there is in China no state religion, none is paid, preferred, or encouraged by it. The emperor is of one faith, many of his mandarins of another, and the majority of the common people of a third."

The numerous fasts and festival which the Catholic religion has established, operate materially to the prejudice of national industry; almost every day of the year has its particular tutelar saint. During my stay at Bruges a jubilee procession took place, which occurs but once every fifty years, in honour of the celebrated Francis Xavier, a Jesuit who suffered martyrdom as a missionary in India, in 1567. The day was fine, and the houses in all the streets through which the procession passed were tastefully decorated with boughs of trees of various descriptions which were fastened



against the walls to the very attics—Orange trees, *Arbutus*'s, *Laurustinus*'s and other shrubs in tubs were disposed around the doors, and several of the fine pictures from the churches were brought out, and fixed in such places where it had been previously arranged that the procession should pass. It commenced in the afternoon, preceded by a number of boys ringing bells, and bearing flags; these were followed by different corporate bodies with their appropriate ensigns, carrying long flambeaux lighted; then followed a number of young females attired in white, and other members of the corporation, next came a priest bearing an image dressed sumptuously in blue and silver, representing the Virgin Mary; more young females and men carrying flambeaux were succeeded by a priest bearing a silver hand, in which, is said to have been enshrined part of one of the thumbs of the said Francis Xavier; this relic was surrounded by priests with flambeaux, incense, and a band of music, the whole terminated by a priest splendidly attired, bearing the host under a canopy of velvet, attended by the military. The procession lasted for several hours, the spectators were numerous, all of whom, at the approach of the host, knelt down in the streets. It halted at the several places appointed, and a short service was performed at each halt.

On the anniversary of the assumption of the Virgin, another procession takes place from each of the churches. The female figures, most splendidly attired, are carried round the city under canopies with the usual accompaniments of priests; in many cases the figures are as large as life, and the people bow down on their knees as they approach—this day appears to be held more sacred than the anniversary, the crucifixion, or even the resurrection; it is observable further, that many of the *jours de fêtes*, or saints days are kept with more strictness than the Sabbath



itself, which in Brussels is the market day for the dealers in pigeons, rabbits, poultry, dogs, etc. in the Grande Place. This is one of the consequences of the French revolution, for under the Austrian government the day was observed with much more decorum.

The Carnival, which in the Italian states, and more particularly at Venice, is kept with much pomp and ceremony, is observed also in the Netherlands, for about a week. Masked balls are given at the theatre on Sunday and Tuesday, and most ridiculous groupes of masked figures occasionally parade the streets. The origin of this pernicious custom it is difficult to trace: it probably originated in the Saturnian or Bacchanalian festivals, and has been most improperly introduced into Christian countries. It immediately precedes Lent, and is considered as a time of great indulgence, previous to the forty days fasting.

The most splendid procession of this nature takes place the day of the Grand Kermesse, the Sunday immediately succeeding the 13th day of July, in every year, at Brussels, to commemorate the restoration of the sixteen miraculous hosts, said to have been stolen. The following is the tradition:--

That in 1369, Jonathan, a rich Jew of Enghein, in Hainault, prevailed upon John of Louvain, who had been recently converted to Christianity, to steal several of the consecrated hosts, by promising him sixty golden pieces, if successful. On the 4th of October, he broke into the church of St. Catherine, and robbed it of sixteen, one of which was a grand host; when he took them to Jonathan, he, with the other Jews, exulted over them. Jonathan was soon after stabbed in his garden by an unknown hand,



and his son took to flight. The widow took the hosts to the Jews, who met in their synagogue, April 12, 1370; when assembled, they stabbed the hosts, and blood *is said* to have issued from them. They then agreed with a woman named Catherine, who had been a Jewess, and still kept up some connexion with them, to carry the hosts to Cologne. She discovered the whole to Peter Van Heede, and returned them. Whether this story be true or false, it was laid hold of to persecute the Jews: some say five were executed; considerable confiscations of property followed, and the Jews were banished. Three of the said hosts are still shown in the cathedral church of St. Gudule, and are annually carried in procession.

As you purpose to visit Brussels this summer, I hope you will be there in time to witness this ceremony, so very different from any thing you see in England.

I am anxious that the remarks which I have made, and may still have to make, on the churches of the Netherlands, and the images, altars, etc. with which they are adorned, may not be interpreted as sanctioning the custom of decorating the temples of religion; the beauty of christianity is its purity and simplicity.

Adieu for the present.

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## LETTER XVI.

BRUSSELS.

It is a fact which is not generally known, that whilst the Netherlands were under the dominion of Napoleon,



Protestant ministers were supported by the French government, in Brussels, and several other cities of the Netherlands.

Two churches are now appropriated for the use of Protestants in this city : the one adjoins Le Musée, called La Chapelle de la Cour, near La Place Royale. This is used by the German, French and English Protestants, who alternately perform their respective services here. It is a neat elegant structure, fitted up as all Christian places of worship ought to be, without distinction of pews, appropriated to the service of the members of the establishment of the church of England, and supported by annual or quarterly subscriptions. Three distinct services of different persuasions of Christians are performed under the same roof. Thus is realized, in the Netherlands, the wish which Frederick III. of Prussia endeavoured in vain to accomplish within his dominions, namely, that the same walls should echo the prayers and praises of the several sects of religion.

The other church is St. Augustin's, situated in Rue St. Augustin, which was occupied in 1406 by the monks of the order of St. Francis, and improved in 1642, after the design of Wincelaus Coebergher ; and is now appropriated for the use of the Dutch Protestants in the morning, where the King, the Prince, and the royal family attend ; and at noon for the use of the British residents ; it is attended by persons of different religious sentiments, but, who voluntarily unite in public service, and in the administration of the sacraments, on the broad principle of mutual forbearance ; this may be viewed as the triumph of liberality over bigotry, and toleration over prejudice.



In this church was performed the baptismal ceremony of the Hereditary Prince of Orange, in 1817.

A circumstance connected with this subject I ought not to omit here:—When the church was ordered to be prepared for this ceremony, the architect had elevated the royal pew six steps above the floor. The king expressed his disapprobation, and ordered the steps to be removed; when the ceremony was performed, the king and royal family had their seats arranged in the parquet, before the royal pew, on a level with the congregation, thereby recognizing this valuable maxim—that in the house of prayer there is no distinction; all are equal in the view of that Being who made of one blood all nations of men on the face of the earth. When monarchs thus recognize by their example just principles of religion, the happiest results may be anticipated.

The birth of an hereditary Protestant prince in the Netherlands cannot be regarded without peculiar interest: it must have a strong tendency to unite more firmly these countries with Great Britain, and operate to preserve that balance of power, which has long been considered as a great desideratum in European politics. With these sentiments I attended the ceremony of the christening of the young Prince of the house of Orange, and rejoiced to see such a number of British visitors present on the occasion.

He was born on the 19th February, 1817, and christened on the 27th March, 1817, by the name of William Alexander Paul Frederick Louis, and is distinguished as the Hereditary Prince of Orange.



I know no country, if I except America, where the true principles of religious liberty are better understood and practised, as far as regards any interference of the government, than in the Netherlands. The following is an extract from the fundamental law of the kingdom, on this subject:—

“ Equal protection is given to all the religious opinions  
 “ which exist in the kingdom. Every subject of the king,  
 “ without any distinction created by their religious opi-  
 “ nions, enjoys equal rights, both civil and political; and  
 “ is equally eligible to all employments and honours what-  
 “ soever. The public exercise of every religion is per-  
 “ mitted, if it does not disturb the general tranquillity.  
 “ The salaries and all other advantages which different  
 “ ministers of religion may obtain or possess, are guaran-  
 “ teed unto them. The king guarantees to every one by  
 “ the fundamental law, that he shall not be disturbed in  
 “ the exercise of his religion.”

Baptism is performed in the Catholic church by sprinkling, in the same manner as in the church of England. Marriage, although one of the sacraments of the Romish church, must be previously performed before the civil magistrate. Notice of all marriages intended to be celebrated, must be affixed for several days on the Hotel de Ville for public inspection, and after being performed and registered there, the parties usually repeat the ceremony at their respective parish churches; but it is not compulsory on them so to do, for marriage in Belgium, as in France, is simply a civil contract.

The marriage of British Protestants in the Netherlands should be celebrated before the magistrate, and afterwards



by a clergyman, in the house of the British ambassador, or in that of a British consul. A register of all the births, marriages, and deaths of British Protestants that occur here, is kept in Brussels by the chaplain for the time being.

No burials are permitted within the walls, in consequence of an edict of the Emperor, Joseph II, about 30 years ago, it being considered prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants. The principal burial grounds are without the gates of Halle and Louvain, adjoining the latter a distinct piece of ground is allotted for Protestants, walled in and kept locked; burials generally take place within forty eight hours after death. The bodies of persons of respectability are deposited without shrouds, and generally without any covering but a common coffin; they are taken away by night to the burial grounds, without the town, unattended, and many are carried together on a hearse, which resembles a car drawn by one horse. The ceremony which usually takes place in the churches is over a complete cenotaph.

The revenues of the priesthood in Belgium having been alienated, many of the churches have been destroyed, and their treasures sold during the French revolution; the clergy are now supported by the government; they receive very moderate incomes, which are increased by voluntary donations; all the sacraments are administered free of expence, except the burial service. Whatever is given at christenings, marriages, or confessions, is wholly gratuitous.

It would fill a volume to enumerate the several relics which yet remain in the churches of the Netherlands. In the church of Anderlecht, besides the relics of St. Guido, which are still carried in an annual procession in September, on the day dedicated to him in the calendar, was formerly



a large bone of St. Paul, and part of the shoe of St. Anne; other relics are still shewn there.

Examine at your leisure how intimately the invention of printing is connected with the progress of the Reformation. It is the natural course of events that light should dispel darkness; but I have now before me one of the pamphlets published in 1807, advocating the re-establishment of the Jesuits in this country.

If an estimate were made of the present state of the Catholic religion in the Netherlands, from exterior appearances, that estimate would be favourable. The bells sound for Matins at six every morning, and on some occasions earlier; the attire of the priests, the incense, the decorations, the altars, the paintings, the statues, the magnificence of the spacious churches, built in a grand style of gothic architecture, venerable from age, are all impressive circumstances. Until noon every day numbers are going in and out, and on the Sunday mornings all the churches are crowded; chairs occupy the places of pews or forms, the poor and the rich are equally accommodated, without distinction; the service is performed in latin, and unintelligible to the majority of the congregation.

The Protestant feels the deepest concern to see that homage paid to images, and the host, which is due alone to the one God. He issued from Mount Sinai a decree, obligatory on the world, forbidding man to make to himself any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters, to bow down to them, or worship them; the Protestant cannot reconcile this command, with the Catholic practise.



The Catholic argues, that the picture or the statue is but the symbol of the deity, and serves only to recall him to remembrance; as in the miniature of an absent or deceased friend, it is the delineation of the features and character that interests rather than the colours of the painting, which are but the medium of representation of the beloved object. But this is a refinement which cannot be entered into by the great mass of worshippers.

There is a glaring impiety in the Roman Catholic system, which I cannot avoid noticing with the most marked disapprobation: in many of the churches are pictures and statues, which presumptuously assume to represent the deity, creating or governing the world! Shall mortal man dare to depict the Omnipotent God? Who can by searching find out God! Who can find out the Almighty to perfection.

Ere the Catholic religion was on the decline, of which there are strong evidences in the Netherlands, a midnight mass was celebrated on the eve of Christmas, with extraordinary splendor, commencing at midnight; it now begins in the several churches at five o'clock in the morning of Christmas day. The cathedral of St. Gudule, the last anniversary, was faintly illuminated, and but thinly attended: the reflection of the glimmering lights, through the magnificent painted glass of the ancient Gothic structure, in the cold and darkness of the morning, offered a most impressive scene for the painter or the poet.

I presume not to unravel the mysteries of that Providence, which, in many cases, is to us inscrutable; but the histories of empires have exhibited some most striking and wonderful coincidences: it was on *La Place Louis Quinze*, in Paris, that Charles IX. issued his mandate for the mas-



sacre of the Huguenots, on which very spot was erected the guillotine, by which Louis the XVI. and Antoinetta, his Queen, suffered. It is not less worthy of remark, that the very means which the papal power adopted, to perpetuate its dominion, by building St. Peters at Rome, was one of the causes of its humiliation. To defray the expenses of this church, the number of indulgencies was increased, which operated powerfully to accelerate the Reformation.

Plenary indulgences are still offered in all Catholic countries, and the Pope wished to have had a resident nuncio at Brussels, which was refused.

The Roman Catholic religion appears to be but a new system of Polytheism: the saints who are prayed unto, are even more numerous than the deities of the heathens; the tendency of this is to produce in the thinking part of mankind doubt and infidelity. Christianity thus viewed through an imperfect medium, is impiously rejected; this incorrect view of it, however, does not in the least affect its reality, it is only the dark and sombrous mantle which veils the purity and sanctity of the religion itself.

Christianity is either the most ingenious delusion that was ever practised on mankind in the most astonishing manner, through a series of successive ages, without any concert between the witnesses by whom it was propagated, who must have been actuated solely by pure benevolence; or, it is a *revelation from heaven*, bearing the impress of its divine author.

Fearless of the results, I invite the Catholic, I invite the infidel to serious enquiry and investigation; when satisfied



of its divine authenticity, to the volume of inspiration, and not to human edicts, or to human councils, let every appeal be made on all subjects connected with religion.

The advocates of infidelity in our own country, have so often been beaten out of the field of controversy, that they cease to wield the weapons of argument, and have recourse to the sarcastic sneer, or the dismaying doubt; and is it not to be regretted, that some of the poetical luminaries of modern times, by the countenance which they afford to vice and infidelity, should mingle with the garlands of roses which they entwine, the poison of the deadly night-shade? I compare the colouring which glows in their strains, to the fascinating Aurora Borealis of Northern regions, or the Ignis Fatuus, that lures only to destroy. Shall the senseless oak remain invulnerable to the northern blast? shall the clods of the earth on which I tread remain through succeeding ages, and the active mind of man become extinct? No—it cannot be, I feel a principle within me, so unconnected with matter, which tells me I shall live when the stars are dark, and when the sun expires: Inspiration comes in aid of this principle, and brings life and immortality to light.

Christianity built on the immutable basis of Eternal Wisdom—venerable by age—lovely by its purity—and the only true solace of suffering humanity, has long withstood the assaults of its enemies, and the injuries it has sustained from its pretended friends.

If Judas endeavoured to prevent its entrance into our world—if Julian apostatized from its faith—if Rousseau environed it with doubts—and Voltaire discharged against it the shafts of a malignant infidelity; it ranks amongst its defenders far nobler names than these. Grotius and Abbadie,



examined into its evidences and maintained its truth, the philosophic Bacon became its disciple; Hale directed towards it the deep researches of his strong intellect, and believed; the pious Paschal lived and died in its faith; the character of the amiable Fenelon was formed upon its maxims? the energetic Saurin employed his powerful mind in elucidating its great truths; Boyle, Locke, and Addison were amongst its advocates. The mighty mind of Milton enkindled at the sacred flame, and the lofty genius of Sir Isaac Newton became prostrate at the foot of the cross.

These with numerous others, amongst whom will be found the wisest and the best of our race, rise to upbraid us, if at any time we hesitate to rank ourselves its disciples.

Man is a compound being formed to exist in two worlds; it is his best wisdom to secure the greatest amount of happiness in both.

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## LETTER XVII.

BRUSSELS.

HAVING, in my former letters, pointed out to you the several objects worthy of notice in the course of my tour, I shall now furnish you with a few general remarks on the state of society and manners in those cities of the Netherlands through which I have passed; applicable more particularly to Brussels, where by a long residence, I have had the best opportunities of making observations. Experience authorises me to assert, that comparing the prices of house rent, of provisions, of dress and of education, with those



of the cities of England, the relative proportion is, as about three is to five, in favour of the Netherlands ; but there are many towns in Great Britain, in which a family may be supported as reasonably as in this part of the Continent, enjoying the satisfaction and advantage of residing in their native country ; and, I trust, I shall not be chargeable either with prejudice or partiality, in saying, that whether the object of the travellers pursuit be picturesque scenery, or substantial comfort, Britain will be found unrivalled. I also feel confident that the majority of the numerous visitors, who, since the return of peace, have travelled on the Continent, will have learnt duly to appreciate the superior advantages which England affords ; at the same time it must be acknowledged a residence in the Netherlands can boast of many advantages.

Whether travelling in the Netherlands by land, or on the canals, distances are estimated by time ; thus, in reply to the question, What is the distance to such a place ? the answer returned is, some certain number of hours. The inns are, in general, good, and the charges moderate, the beds are placed against the walls, which renders them inconvenient ; but the large pillows used in this country are more comfortable than those used in England.

The streets, for the most part, are spacious, the annoyance experienced from the rattling on all sides of hackney-coaches, cabriolets and other carriages, is so great, that eyes and ears are both required to be on the alert, and for personal safety, it is sometimes necessary to take refuge in the first shop which offers, there being no distinct pavement for the protection of foot passengers. In several of the Belgian towns, dogs of the wolf species, harnessed four or five abreast, are employed in drawing very considerable



burdens. In Antwerp oxen very much supply the use of horses.

The shops in the principal streets of Brussels make a very respectable appearance; the shopkeepers generally, are wealthy and independent, and seldom submit to make much abatement from the prices they demand, except in articles of luxury: many of them endeavour to take advantage of English purchasers, but with some few exceptions, the latter are treated with courtesy. Very few new houses are to be seen; the precarious state of the country, which has so often been the seat of war, accounts for this. Should peace continue, security will be re-established; and the once magnificent cities of the Netherlands may be expected to increase in population, and resume in some degree their ancient splendor. It strikes an English traveller with surprize that houses of a superior class, having in front, on each floor, from ten to fourteen plate glass windows, are frequently found in secondary streets, and even in lanes; and in the best streets, large buildings adjoin others of a very mean appearance, such as cabarets or public-houses and inferior shops. The streets are well lighted in the evenings. Some few of the houses are built of brick, covered with plaister, which requires to be annually re-coloured. This is done with some taste with an argillaceous earth, of a light tea-green hue, found near Namur, which, when properly prepared, produces a pleasing effect.

The cities of the Netherlands are kept very clean; every Saturday afternoon the servants wash before their respective doors, and the water runs copiously down the streets. The numerous public fountains contribute greatly to the health and cleanliness of its inhabitants.



The long alliance that has subsisted between France and Belgium, has had considerable influence on the habits and manners of the latter. The Belgians are fond of appearances, and magnify every object connected with their own country. In their degrees of comparison they make great use of the superlative.

The cities are divided into sections; but the houses are numbered with such apparent irregularity, that, without a very clear direction, it is difficult to find an address. In Ostend, Bruges, Ghent and Brussels, the Flemish and French languages are principally spoken, but very little English. At Antwerp the Dutch and Flemish languages are most in use. The price of bread is regulated by the magistrates, and the variations affixed on the Hotel de Ville.

These cities abound with beggars, who are found at every corner, and are very importunate to the British in particular; they have arrived from all parts of the continent, and many of them appear to be objects of extreme commiseration: they have been forbidden to beg by the police, and rarely apply to the natives. The government has employed the male poor the last winter, in labour on the ramparts and elsewhere. Few gypsies are seen here; there exists an ancient edict, by which they are punishable with death on entering Brabant: this law is not now enforced.

The numerous festivals of the church, or fêtes, operate most powerfully to produce much of that poverty visible in the great cities of Belgium and Flanders; scarcely a week but has one, two or more celebrations, which turn the heads of the lower classes, and occasion expenditure



rather than earnings. It is much to be lamented, that when the several religious orders were abolished, the holidays had not been abolished also.

You would be surprised at the ignorance which shopkeepers of some respectability evince in reckoning, in some instances it becomes very troublesome, for even if you cast up the amount for them, they show strong marks of suspicion. The education of the peasantry, and the lower classes of society, is greatly neglected; even in the more opulent classes, females are not sent to school until the age in which they should be taken from it. Cards form a branch of education; at some of the schools, they engage in them on the Sunday, on their return from mass. The females are very fond of dress, and are particularly nice about their feet.

Females take the greatest share in the management of shops. In domestic and agricultural branches also they are very active, and may be said to possess a tolerable share of beauty: but although, at first sight they appear pleasing, upon more minute examination, many of them will be found to want that refinement which is produced only by a liberal education; but they are lively, and free from that formality, reserve and pride, which is oftentimes observable in the English character, and which is so repulsive to strangers.

Much has been said and written upon the licentiousness of the female character in the Netherlands. That there is some reason for the remark must be acknowledged—but with numerous honourable exceptions: and although I would not be thought the apologist for vice, yet it receives some palliation from a defective education, and the vicious



habits of the male sex, which are well known, and alledged by females in their own excuse. A pernicious custom prevails extensively. The husbands or fathers spend their afternoons in societies, at estaminets or drinking houses, to the neglect of home, and thus by the incorrectness of their own manners, shew a bad example to their families.

Their own writers admit that the inhabitants of the several cities possess an insulated provincial character, and much local partiality, which links them together by the place of their birth, rather than by that of their nation; this appears evident to common observation.

They may be observed pretty generally to possess an assumed independance of character, which is oftentimes offensive and ridiculous, similar to what is charged upon the Americans.

There is one most striking difference between the manners of England and those which prevail in the Netherlands. You here frequently see females of great respectability in life, accompanied to the theatre and in their walks by their female servants, behaving with the greatest familiarity towards them; and amongst the male sex you do not find that haughtiness towards inferiors, and oftentimes to their equals or superiors, which is so justly complained of by foreigners, more especially as derogatory to the English character. Repeated victories by sea and land, and the successful issue to political plans, have in a most wonderful manner contributed to increase our national pride, in which every individual seems to take his share; it must be acknowledged, that both in male and female of the British nation, there is far too great an amount of fancied self-importance and ostentation. It is however worthy of remark,



that it most abounds among those who have no real merit to excite the respect from society which they fancy themselves entitled to; in those who have newly acquired wealth, or in sprigs of upstart nobility; I have generally found the best educated, the most well bred and sensible men, the most accessible, the most affable, and the most polite. The princes of the blood in England, uniformly return the salute to the humblest individual who offers it.

It is not here intended to confound that distinction of rank that prevails in society, and is attended with happy results; it is only argued that there is a respect which man owes to man, unless degraded by vice and crime; the honest day-labourer and the peasant, are entitled to notice from the peer and the prince; in the order of society they are mutually dependent on each other, for the peasant can live better without the prince or the peer, than the prince without the peasant; and I have no doubt that the unhappy animosity which is found on the Continent against the British, has been greatly increased, if not generated by that egotism and haughtiness which I am now arraigning. I have witnessed scenes which have made me blush for my countrymen.

Expect a continuation of these observations on the manners and customs of the inhabitants of this country in my next.

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## LETTER XVI.

BRUSSELS.

MANY of those follies and vices which prevail in Paris, have found encouragement here. The subscription houses

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where gaming prevails are much frequented, and occasionally very large sums of money have been lost, with all the ruinous consequences usually attendant thereon. Billiards are a very favourite amusement: rooms for this purpose are connected with all the coffee-houses, and on Sunday evenings they are mostly frequented; they have too often proved the portals to the higher species of gambling. The spirit of gambling is much increased by the Roulet tables in the streets and market places: where children are tempted to adventure their small pittance.

The seeds of vice thus early implanted, are nurtured by the constant excitement of the royal lotteries, greatly resembling, in their organization, the well-known and destructive system of insurances in England, now happily prohibited. The lotteries are drawn publicly every Saturday morning, in the hall of administration, near the Grand Sablon. Five numbers only are drawn each day, and again returned into the wheel. The prizes fall to those who chance to have chosen the drawn numbers and are paid according to the amount staked upon them. If governments would accurately estimate the importance of moral principle to the well-being of kingdoms, they would abolish lotteries, and prohibit every species of gaming by severe penalties, affixing as a punishment some public shame and ignominy: it undermines human happiness, and saps the foundations of empires and of states. Brussels has exhibited some of its fatal effects: a gambling house was established there, where the nightly orgies were constantly kept. The amount of ruin was great, and the government very properly interfered, shut up the house, and fined the owners in heavy sums, so that they have fled the country. Many who have lost their properties there, have also left Brussels in disgrace, and brought a stain partially upon



the British character. Rouge et Noir was the favourite game.

The disputes which have originated at these houses have occasioned several duels. Strange infatuation ! which dignifies as an affair of honour, what infinite wisdom and unerring justice, will punish as an act of murder. Why do not governments interfere, and, by proper regulations, prevent such atrocities. Restraints upon the bad passions and evil actions of the unprincipled or the overbearing, are requisite : let courts of honour be established in every province, with full power to inflict disgrace, and even banishment in flagrant cases.

This criminal custom extends here to the lowest ranks ; frequent duels occur with the common soldiers, who fight with swords until the blood is drawn, when vengeance and honour are considered to be appeased—but a duel was lately fought in the Allée Verte by two soldiers, one of whom was killed. Duels were unknown among the Romans until the period of their decline ; the lives of their citizens were most scrupulously guarded by their laws.

Music and dancing are the favourite amusements of the Belgians of all classes. In the summer evenings, there are frequently “ *Grand Bals*,” admission one placquet or three pence half-penny each, at the cabarets and gardens, surrounding the towns : and at the several Table d’Hotes in the city, a band of musicians play during dinner, and collect their rewards from the company : in every public house music is heard ; and such is the fondness for dancing, that it is followed as a passion rather than as an amusement : it is no uncommon thing for a man of forty years of



age and upwards to take lessons in some new step; the dancing master assumes the rank of artist.

Generally speaking the Flemings may be considered a large race of people, but they do not possess that vivacity which is so conspicuous in the French; there is in their character, of the lower classes especially, such opposite qualities as are very irreconcilable with each other; on some occasions there is an apathy which it is difficult to rouse to emotion or action, but at others times an irritability, which vents itself in the most violent vociferations, and marks of malignancy and passion, seldom indeed proceeding to blows; their own chronicles relate, that in the fourteenth century, about fourteen hundred murders were committed in the city of Ghent alone.

This irritability is awakened, principally when their pecuniary interests are concerned, I have witnessed several dreadful quarrels about a few pence only: the noisy loquacity of the servants is in some instances unbearable.

In the winter season, after Christmas, several balls and concerts among the higher classes are given at the Concert Noble in an elegant style: but although the Belgians shew great fondness for music, they do not appear to possess much elevated feeling for it; they practise it rather as a fashionable amusement, in imitation of the French: they have few if any composers; it must be acknowledged, however, that they have contributed greatly to the revival of the art in Europe, and itinerant musicians on the violin--wind instruments, and even on the harp, abound. The rooms where the Concert Noble is held, are decorated in elegant taste, and the company is select.



Archery was formerly a favourite amusement here, and regular societies were established to practise it. Here are two theatres; the small one in the Park was sometime since occupied by an English company, but it did not meet encouragement; the other is situated in the lower part of the town; and a third and splendid new theatre is now building, which is nearly ready for exhibition.

The Kermesse or Village Feast, is maintained with as much spirit as in the days of Teniers and Ostade; every cabaret in the vicinity of the cities exhibits it repeatedly; there is every reason to believe, with much injury to the virtue and domestic habits of the inferior classes. A select society of English gentlemen of the highest respectability, have occasionally amused themselves with private theatricals.

I was at Brussels on Thursday the 17th October, 1816, when William, Prince of Orange, made his grand entry into that city, with his princess, for the first time after their marriage.

Great previous preparations had been made, in the principal streets from the Porte de Laeken, where he entered, on his way from Antwerp and Malines. At every ten feet distance on each side poles were fixed, about ten feet in height, which were well covered with boughs of green holly, and festoons of the same communicating with each other, for an extent of nearly two miles; it was a clear bright autumnal day. He entered the city about two o'clock, with his princess, in an open landau, attended by the several municipal bodies, and parties of the military, on horse and foot; and to terminate the procession, four decorated triumphal cars; the first, emblematical



of the city of Brussels, contained a large orange tree, covering with its shade the Protectress of the City of Brussels, represented by a young female, having her head encircled with a mural crown, seated on the side of a hill representing the topographical situation of this city. At her feet the Naiad of the Senne poured forth the waters from an urn. The Belgic Lion, treading at his feet the emblems of war, as though proud of the splendour of the city, and offering a horn of plenty.

On the trunk of the orange tree was suspended the emblem of Peace, entwined with branches of olive, to indicate the tranquillity which Brussels has experienced from its happy effects.

The second car represented St. Michael borne upon clouds, treading under foot the plagues from which he had preserved Brussels—such as war, famine and discord. His right hand holding the sword with which he had crushed the evil genius; with his other hand he invoked the blessings of Heaven upon the city.

The third car represented Victory and Peace, placed upon an elevated platform, holding palm and olive branches, elevated to signify the Goddess of Agriculture and the Genius of Arts and Sciences, the latter grouped in divers manners to transmit to posterity traits of the actions of the Prince—the young hero of Belgium.

The fourth car, of Hymen, represented the union of Valour and Beauty, personified by Mars and Venus; Hymen united them by garlands of flowers—Love, Conjugal Fidelity, Smiles and Pleasures were interwoven in the same chain, of which one of the extremities was woven by



Fate, and the other conducted by Cupid, who, at the head of this assemblage of flowers, held two hearts pierced with the same arrow, and seemed to augment with his sigh the flame which embraces them.

The Prince and Princess, on their arrival at the palace, immediately presented themselves at the balcony, and were cheered by the spectators.

The whole was greatly enlivened by the very respectable and shewy appearance of the populace, decorated in such a lively and variegated display of reds, greens, blues, and other colours, as to produce at a distance a very striking effect, somewhat similar to a beautiful flower garden. In the evening the city was illuminated; the appearance of the Place Royal, the Park, and the elegant buildings, presented a magnificent spectacle, so as locally in this part of the city at least, to rival the grandeur of a London illumination.

In the evening some fire-works were let off from the centre of the Place Royale. A lofty pole, upwards of one hundred feet in height, was elevated, and on its summit was a fire-work representing a bird. Several hundred rockets were aimed at it, but without success; at length a boy ascended the pole, and lighted the fire-work, at some risk; but neither his exploits, the fire-works, nor the illuminations, excited much emotion among the Belgians; they appeared to behold all with equal apathy. Similar remarks were made when Mad. Blanchard ascended in the balloon from the Park, all was silence—None of those acclamations by which English spectators rend the air, on such occasions.



In severe winters, a species of amusement takes place here, unknown in Britain. The Prince, the nobility and the gentry, purchase or hire sledges properly fitted up, and expensively decorated, named "Les Traineaux," and drawn by one horse, in which they proceed daily in procession about the Park and principal streets, and present a novel, but very lively and agreeable spectacle. They are let out on hire, by the hour, and are very expensive.

In most of the principal cities of the Netherlands, the newspapers of Britain, France and Germany are taken; there are, also, daily papers in French; and at Brussels is an English newspaper, published weekly, entitled "The NETHERLANDS ADVERTISER."

In Brussels the clocks strike the hour that is approaching half an hour before it arrives, so that every hour is struck twice, which occasions great confusion in time. At half-past eleven o'clock each night, a bell sounds that every public-house may be cleared, which is an excellent regulation.

Here is a school for pugilistic instruction in the English manner, and also a menagerie, where dogs are trained and instructed in a variety of tricks and fancies. Poodle dogs are highly esteemed; from respectable authority I state an instance of sagacity in this race, which indicates a near approach to the faculty of reason. A young Poodle dog had observed that when his master rung the bell the servant always entered; without further instruction, the animal acquired the habit when he wanted to quit the room to ring the bell.

A most prejudicial custom prevails here in the manage—



ment of infants, they are bound hands and feet in swaddling clothes for some weeks, and sometimes even three months, scarcely suffering them to be shaken or moved; it becomes a question how far this state of inaction in the earliest hours of life may generate a degree of apathy or insensibility in the future character.

A very favourite amusement in the summer season with the Belgians, is to make parties to the Cabarets without the cities, where thousands may be seen in the afternoons, among whom are persons of respectability, who sit in the air, outside the houses, taking refreshments. Riding is considered a necessary accomplishment in the male sex, it is thought disgraceful not to ride well. Horses are fixed in frames when shod, greatly to their annoyance.

There is every reason to hope, that a few years will give a new impetus to the national character; at present, it must be admitted, that in arts, in sciences, and in general education, the inhabitants of Belgium are a century behind Great Britain.

Dancing is an amusement highly esteemed. Quadrilles and the Waltz are the favourite movements which are performed with great spirit; with sincere regret I notice that many of our own fair countrywomen have caught the contagion, and exhibit publicly in the Waltz; that dance so blighting to female modesty, so dangerous to female virtue; there was a period when its introduction into Britain would have been most severely reprobated; let me remind my beloved countrywomen, that luxury and vice will subdue a nation that cannot be overpowered by arms. The soldiers of Hannibal braved the dangers of the Alps, and conquered



opposing Roman legions, they lost their virtue, and were subdued by the luxuries of Capua.

The wedding ring here is worn on the third finger of the right hand; rings are a favourite ornament, the fingers are often seen full of them.

The traveller who has been much in South Wales, will recognise in the manners, features and exclamations of the peasantry here, a great similarity to that part of Great Britain.

Drunkenness does not appear to be a prevailing vice of the Netherlands, fewer instances of it are seen here than in England. The drinking rooms of the cabarets or public houses, are larger and have a much more respectable appearance than in Britain.

Coffee is the favourite beverage of the natives, it is moderate in price, and they have the art of making it well; the meat is dressed in small pieces, generally with rich sauces and savoury; the hinder legs of a particular species of frogs are in high esteem. Excellent vegetable soups are made here at a small expence, in short they can live with an economy unknown to the English.

The stillness which prevails in the several cities of the Netherlands, surprises those who are accustomed to the noise and bustle of the streets of London until a very late hour every night; about dusk, even in the winter, the shops are shut, very few are open at candle light; and at eight o'clock in winter and ten in summer, scarcely an individual is seen in the principal streets; that unhappy class of











females so numerous in the cities of England, are not allowed to perambulate here: they are under the regulation of the police, and any flagrant irregularity would be speedily noticed. But a custom prevails, yet more reprehensible; young boys, who attend the Diligences and barges to carry luggage, and guide strangers about the cities are the pandors of vice, and offer to point out the residences of these unhappy creatures; thus early initiated in vice, they are not likely themselves to become very valuable members of society. This subject demands the interference of authority.

The national character partakes greatly of irritability—and has ever exhibited itself in ardent exertions in favour of freedom; under judicious management, the people may be easily governed.

A marked distinction divides the ranks of society, neither the lower classes of tradesmens wives or daughters, farmers wives, those women who attend the markets, nor female servants are seen to wear hats or bonnets. They use a veil of printed linen, of black stuff, or of a rich costly black silk, originally introduced by the Spaniards, called "*La faille*," worn as seen in the Madona heads of the pictures of Salsa Farrata, or Carlo Dolce: they are very becoming, much more so than many modern dresses which fashion has substituted.

A general air of comfort and independence appears in the features of the females; the connoisseur will trace among them the models from whence Rubens drew his ideas of feminine beauty. Certain nameless arts of indecency are occasionally exhibited in public, by some of the lower classes, unpleasant to an English mind. A habit



prevails of emptying water out of the windows into the streets, which renders them offensive in warm weather: this custom, indeed, does not take place in the Place Royale, the Park, and some few of the principal streets, but is practised extensively, and is highly disgusting in many parts of the city, even from houses which are very respectable, and where numerous servants are kept. This might surely be prevented by the police.

The servants will be found by the English very troublesome and difficult to manage; they are industrious, active, and clearly, but very obstinate; wages indeed are moderate, but they will take every possible opportunity to deceive, by giving away coals, bread and provisions to their friends or relations; this is universally complained of, even by the native inhabitants.

They are remarkable for their loquacity; in this art they have a volubility which is astonishing. They are under excellent regulations by the police, and masters, or mistresses, should require to see the proper certificates from the police of good behaviour, for false characters in writing are very common, and are lent to each other very frequently, the utmost precaution is necessary on this head.

The eastern and southern sides of the city are said to abound in minerals; from the character of the soil, I deem this doubtful. Naturalists affirm that no venemous snakes are known in the Netherlands. Monsieur Burtin possesses a collection of Natural History and fossils, many of which were found in the environs of Namur.

The mode of warming the rooms is very disagreeable; the chimnies are closed, and wood is principally burnt in



iron stoves, which project into the room, and a long iron pipe goes up the chimney; after a company has been some time in a room thus heated, and the door closed, it becomes quite suffocating and unwholesome.

The Theatre in the Place de La Monnaie, was built in 1700, and is one of the most ancient edifices of the kind in Europe, which has never experienced an accident; the interior is well laid out, the whole exhibits a pleasing effect. It cannot boast of its actors; it is supplied principally from the French theatres, and except when any actors of eminence are here from Paris, the performances go off heavily. The best plays are generally selected for the Sunday evenings, and on those nights the theatre is fullest of company.

Comparing the present state of Brussels with what it was previously to the battle of Waterloo, when under French dominion, the advantages which it has derived from a connection with Britain, will very forcibly appear.

Previously to the period of the French revolution, the English character on the Continent was held in the highest estimation; with real concern I notice, that so many instances of injustice have occurred, within the last twelve months, in the Netherlands, as to have brought a stigma on the British nation. I am willing to hope, that necessity, arising from extensive national calamity, may have been the fundamental cause, in most instances, of this complaint, for Britains are educated in, and possess high principles of honour and justice; with the return of prosperity, the cause will be done away and the effect will, no doubt cease; for although heavy clouds have rolled through the political hemisphere of Britain, I trust there is a brightness



above the storm which will yet disperse them, and once more elevate our beloved country to its former pre-eminence. I must observe also, that it is not equitable to estimate national character by the few instances of delinquency; amongst the residents in the Netherlands some considerable amount of virtue and of worth will be found.

Brussels appears to have been formerly subject to pestilential diseases to an alarming extent, from which they are now free, particularly in 1489--1529--1578--1587--1666--and lastly in 1741--it has also experienced some few shocks of earthquake in 1504--1549--1692--1760 and 1762.

This letter is long, but the variety it offers I trust will have preserved it from being tedious.

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## LETTER XIX.

### BRUSSELS.

THE earliest records describe Belgium as possessing extraordinary fertility. Pliny mentions the excellence of its fruits, and Guicciardini in 1582, describes very fully the abundance of vegetables and grain which it then produced.

Previous to the year 1500, it supplied England with considerable quantities of vegetables, and since that period the gardens and pleasure grounds of Britain have received great additions from the Low Countries. Wall-flowers, Carnations, and the Provence Rose, were brought from thence to Norwich in 1567, and sallads, cabbages, and



gooseberries, at a much earlier period, it is supposed about 1509. Britain learnt her first Agricultural lessons from Belgium.

Cherry trees were brought in 1540 from Flanders, and planted in Kent with such success, that an orchard of 32 acres produced in one year 100*l*.

The monks were among the earliest cultivators of Flanders. The several princes who have in succession governed that country, have been uniformly found to afford most liberal encouragements to agriculture, considering it as the original source of national wealth. When the vast forests of Belgium were converted into fruitful plains, the possessors enjoying the advantages of a free constitution, and the undisturbed possession of what they had acquired, were stimulated to great exertions, and the fertility of the country became proverbial. No extent of territory within the same degrees of latitude, can be found to possess more natural advantages than the United Netherlands. A rich soil, a mild climate, for the most part, an extensive industrious and opulent population, equitable laws, great cities, numerous villages, etc. are important advantages; when to these are added the good roads, the majestic rivers which intersect or bound these countries, and the extended line of sea coast which they possess, we trace the causes of their great prosperity.

The vine was once cultivated in Flanders and Brabant, but never with any great success. Amidst the numerous wars which have destroyed the towns, ruined the commerce, destroyed the manufactories, and greatly lessened the inhabitants of the cities, agriculture has flourished, and the population has increased in the villages.



Agriculture was carried, in the 15th century, to much greater perfection in the Low Countries, than in any other part of Europe; each successive year the fields were loaded with grain. The lands were, and still continue to be, divided into small farms, seldom exceeding fifty acres; except in Brabant, about Wallon, where they are leased out in farms of several hundred acres. The States of Hainault made a law to prevent more than one hundred and fifty acres being let in any single farm. And if a bold peasantry, "their country's pride," or, in other words, if an increasing, healthy, happy population, be considered, as it surely must be, one of the most valuable sources of national wealth, it will be most promoted, where the lands are divided into farms of such an extent, that the proprietor or farmer can manage the whole, without that anxiety and cupidity which ever accompanies extensive concerns. It is an object deserving of serious enquiry, how far that system which has of late years prevailed in Great Britain, of leasing out lands in large farms may not have very considerably increased the distresses under which she has long laboured, which is daily forcing her population to seek in other countries those means of subsistence they strive for in vain, in their native land.

Flanders exhibits the happy effects of human industry. In the twelfth century it was covered with vast woods, where now is seen the verdant meadow, the waving corn, the cultivated garden, the comfortable cottage, and the happy peasantry; a national education and emancipation from superstition is all that is wanted to render this people truly happy.

An ingenious continental author in 1784, describes the soil of Flanders as inexhaustible, and containing within it-



self the true principles of vegetation, “composed of a  
 “blackish colour, sometimes inclining to dark brown, the  
 “particles infinitely diviseable, reducible to a very fine  
 “powder, mellow to the touch, and preserves an equal de-  
 “gree of temperature.” The soil of the Netherlands, com-  
 pared with that of Britain, may be considered as much  
 lighter, and not possessing such staple qualities.

An examination into the grain, the bread, the beer and  
 the vegetables of this country, confirm the truth of this ob-  
 servation. I have seen scarcely any clay, in the several  
 districts which I have travelled, but the upper or alluvial  
 soil is of considerable thickness. Although the farmers  
 may not be said to possess great wealth, they bring up  
 their families with industry, and in that happy state of me-  
 diocrity which guards them from the dangers of riches—few  
 instances of indigence are to be seen, except in the cities.  
 The wives and daughters attend the markets, which by  
 this means, are supplied with abundance of poultry, butter,  
 cheese and eggs at a moderate price. The finest butter  
 and cheese are made near Charleroi, and at a village near  
 Port du Halle.

A weekly market for cattle is fixed in each principal  
 city—in Brussels it is from 9 to 12 on Thursday mornings,  
 near the gate of Laeken; the cattle are not of a large de-  
 scription or very fat; but they are healthy. The breed of  
 cows are remarkable for having small heads, the best come  
 from Germany.

The horses are good, carriage horses more especially,  
 and may be purchased from forty Napoleons the pair and  
 upwards. The draft horses are strong, but many of them



too hollow in the back. Flanders mares are well known in England.

The breed of sheep is small, and the wool generally is coarse. I have observed only one flock of Merinos in the country. The meadows on the borders of the Senne derive great fertility from being flooded from the river, during the summer they are remarkably dry.

Except in the lowest and marshy parts, fogs are seldom seen—in Brussels rarely, and never of long duration.

The crops of clover are remarkably fine, and grow to a great height. Before the wheat crops are carried off the ground, turnips are sown, but they do not grow large. Wheat, rye, oats, and barley are the usual successions of crops, followed every third or fourth year by clover, or some other green crops. During the eventful period of the revolution, for the last twenty years, many of the great proprietors have been compelled to leave their extensive demesnes, some of whom have suffered greatly in their properties. This has occasioned a considerable degree of misery in those districts: numbers who were employed under the former proprietors are now idle, but this is a partial evil, and by no means an extensive one. The abolishing the law of primogeniture will in a process of time operate powerfully to increase the number of small farms, and promote population.

It is very customary to hire farm labourers by the year, giving them their food and from eight to ten nobles annually, equal to about six or eight pounds sterling. In the neighbourhood of Brussels, reapers instead of receiving wages, take every twenty-seventh row of grain when cut,



which is found very advantageous for the labourers. Many of the principal farmers are very opulent. But no agricultural Society exists, nor is there any great spirit of improvement sought for or encouraged.

No wheel ploughs are seen : a light short plough, drawn by two horses is generally used, which is guided by the ploughman, and the boy is employed to drive the horses.

The ploughings are made in general far too shallow, and it is worthy of remark, that whilst the harvest is getting in from one part of the field, the ploughing and sowing for the next season is frequently going on at another part of the same field.

The drags or harrows have wooden teeth. Iron harrows are unknown, nor does the soil render them necessary. Lime stone is not much used as a manure, except about Namur, in the vicinity of the lime rocks.

Brabant is more hilly than Flanders, but yet very fertile. It presents numerous cottages, and a vigorous, healthy population : the Province of Hainault is rich in meadows, hills, and vallies. The lands of the Netherlands lie in such extensive level plains, with so few hills or mountains, that in favourable seasons they yield crops far beyond the natural consumption of the country ; which, if not exported, would serve for several succeeding seasons ; but so great is the similarity of the soil, that throughout the whole district crops are generally good, or generally bad, with few exceptions. The paved roads, the canals and the rivers, afford the greatest facilities for taking produce to market, and obtaining manures in return. The mildew is said to be unknown, which is attributed to a custom

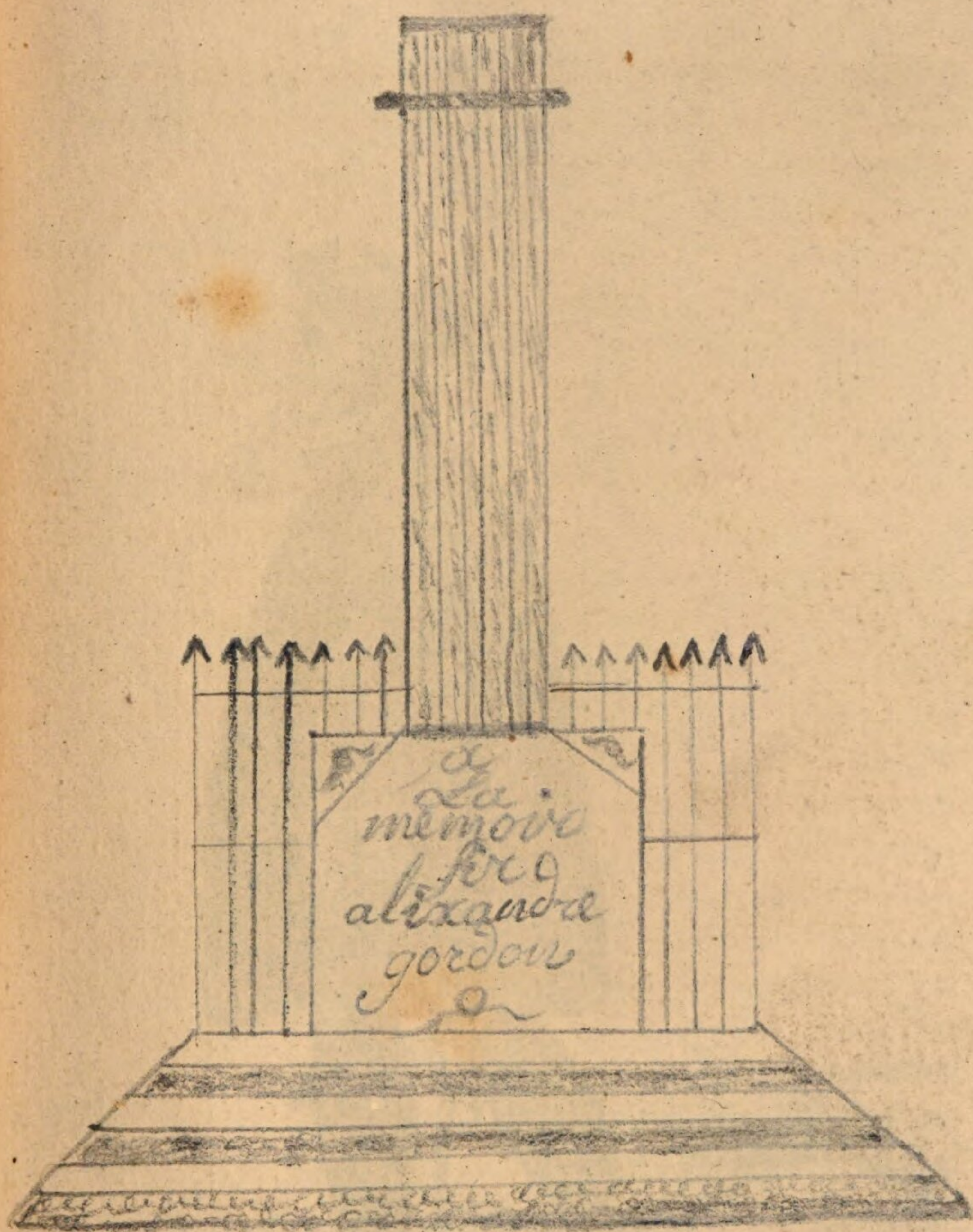


of steeping the corn in a light preparation of sulphate of copper with water, but I do not find that this takes place generally. Corn fields, of considerable extent, are sometimes seen in the champaign countries. Much care is used in selecting the seed, and changing it from time to time.

On the banks of the canal the farms are seen to be divided into very small fields; this may be done for shelter during the very severe winters to which they are sometimes exposed, or to procure early crops for manure and is laid on with great profusion. I cannot find that the compost heaps are prepared with much judgment—very few are to be seen. Dung is used green or fresh: here are no waste lands, every acre is under cultivation, but the farmers are not equally provident of human labour. Several men are employed to do the work of one, but the price of labour is moderate—from eight to ten sous per day. It may be remarked that few cows or other cattle are seen grazing in the meadows until after the first crops of hay are got in; they are kept up in stalls or farm yards, and their food is cut and carried to them, which greatly increases manure, and prevents waste, but the cattle have the less range for exercise. The divisions of the lands are constructed to act as drains. Oil cakes and grains are much used in the fattening of cattle, which do not attain to great size or weight, as in England; with an economy there unknown the potatoe-parings, the cabbage-leaves, and the residue from all other vegetables, are collected from the markets and elsewhere, and constitute in part the food of the cattle.

Whatever perfection the agriculturists may have attained here, it is wholly the effect of practical knowledge, for of theoretical they know nothing, there exists not a single vo-





fait par  
jean Bte Brasime  
à mon saint Jean







lume, scarcely a single pamphlet, which treats upon the subject even in the papers of the academies. The principal crops consist of wheat, barley, oats, flax, rye, tobacco, hops, turnips, chiccory, clover, etc. Dutch clover is known to be excellent. Fallows are rarely employed in these fertile countries, with such depth of soil they are unnecessary. The implements of husbandry are ill contrived, and the carts and waggons awkward and unwieldy; the one horse cart used in farming is very heavy, but sand is carried to the towns in one of a good construction.

In the Pays de Waes the wild cabbage grows upon a stalk of prodigious size, and the Sarasin wheat, so humble in many other countries, attains a height here which is surprising. A great quantity of turnips are grown for horned cattle, and carrots for horses and pigs. The soil is so light that it is easily laboured, and well adapted for the growth of carrots, which attain great lengths and sizes, and are excellent. Cows, in this district, yield extraordinary supplies of milk; as might be expected where the country is so fertile: the art of cultivating land is brought to great perfection, it obtains a very high rent, in some places 500 florins or 30 to 45 nap. per bonnier, or about two and a quarter English acres, and both in value and in cultivation, this district offers a striking contrast to the country of Les Pays Wallons.

In Brabant, about Wallon, are some very extensive farms; but in the other districts the lands are leased out into small farms, possessing such natural fertility, that fallows are unnecessary. In Flanders the farmers are numerous, but labourers are few. In Wallon and Namur the farmers are few, and the labourers numerous.



In the neighbourhood of Courtray, flax is cultivated to high perfection; a considerable part of the thread for making the fine laces is grown there. Flax is cultivated so extensively in several districts of the Netherlands, as to afford considerable employment for the poor in spinning and weaving.

Abbé Man, in his view of Brussels, states that he gathered in 1791, one ear of white wheat which contained fifty-four grains; another of red wheat which contained forty-nine, and another of bearded wheat with forty-four grains, each of which were well filled. In 1783 he gathered an ear of wheat which contained seventy grains, and in 1785, he gathered one which contained eighty-four grains. In 1817, an ear of barley was gathered near Alost, which contained one hundred and ten grains.

The district of Luxemburg is the worst cultivated and has the smallest population: Namur abounds in minerals, and is mountainous, but very fertile; the Meuse, a picturesque and beautiful river, contributes in no small degree to benefit the adjoining territories. In the province of Limbourg are many very rich pastures, and on the lands of the Northern coasts the marshes are found to fatten with great rapidity the lean cattle which are brought from Germany, from Denmark, and other places; these marshes have been reclaimed from the sea.

But perhaps no part of this country exhibits greater symptoms of the high state of agriculture, than the lands about Nivelles, Tirlemont, and the Pays de Waes, between Antwerp and Ghent; the numerous neat and comfortable cottages, the little gardens and the fields, exhibit a character indicative of the good system of husbandry practised. A



peculiar manner of draining the lands is adopted here, which deserves attention. It is beyond a doubt that a great part of the Netherlands was originally covered by the sea: fossil remains have been found in numerous districts. The coasts are greatly exposed to the winds from the North Pole, crossing over the sea without the intervention of any lands, which accounts for that nipping cold experienced in severe winters. Brussels is colder than Paris, and warmer and less humid than London, both in winter and summer. It is stated that rain falls usually about 150 days in each year here, and that the summer heat of Brussels is about  $28^{\circ}$  above, and winters cold  $10^{\circ}$  under the freezing point of Rheamur. North West winds are most prevalent: they bring thunder storms in summer, but earthquakes are unknown in the Netherlands.

In so extensive a district it must be evident that great varieties of soil will be found. Its general characteristic, however, is a deep, sandy loam, and very absorbent. The climates vary greatly between the southern parts of the interior, and the northern coasts.

In the vicinities of the several cities, vegetables are produced in abundance, in the cultivation of these crops in succession, great judgment is shewn; the same piece of land yields three or four crops each year as in England, but the gardeners are not accustomed to force early crops, nor would they be rewarded by a liberal price for their labour, expense and risk; every thing comes on in its season, and in plenty; and peas, which are very fine, continue unusually long, they are to be had in the markets in November. Potatoes are planted whole from the small ones, which in Britain are given to the dogs, and although they do not attain to the size they do there, the soil is favourable to them



and they boil mealy and well. Vegetables, in winter, are dearer here than in England; no hand glasses are made use of to shelter the forward crops: garden labour may be obtained from 10*d.* to 16*d.* per day. The garden tools are awkward machines; the spade is no other than a common shovel, the soil is so light that the use of the foot is unnecessary. In the gardening grounds manure is often used in a liquid state, it is prepared in holes dug for that purpose, which are filled with water and kept supplied with all sorts of refuse, which is taken out and made use of to water crops copiously from time to time, until the holes are emptied, and their contents dug into the lands. The seed crops suffer greatly from worms, a peculiar method is adopted to counteract this injury; straw is cut into chaff and scattered thickly over the ground, which the worms feed on, and the seed springs up.

Asparagus and many other vegetables are cultivated in the open fields; the red cabbage grows very large and heavy. A species of kale, said to be indigenous to this country, which throws off from its stalks small shoots about the size of a walnut, resembling very small cabbages, called Brussels sprouts, constitutes an excellent autumnal vegetable; it degenerates soon in other countries. Cucumbers are very rare—no long ones to be seen. The garden hoe is on a good construction, I do not remember to have seen any similar to it in England. The lateral branches of trees are kept pruned close, by which means the trees attain height and make good sticks of timber, but are without side boughs for a considerable part of the trunk; this, with the lightness of the soil, makes a walk in the woods here, much more dry than in those of England, and is favourable also to the growth of plants and vegetables under them.



Standard fruit trees are trained in the like manner, in small gardens this may be advantageous, but I have some doubts whether it is calculated to produce fine fruit or great crops; as it well known that the finest fruit is found towards the extremities of branches. Fruits of all sorts abound at moderate prices, pears, apples, cherries, strawberries, peaches, are produced in great profusion, and rich in flavour.

Double Pomegranates, Laurustinus, Arbutus, Bays, Roses, Jessamines and other ornamental shrubs are budded here upon thick upright stems, so as to form large round heads. The first sort resemble young orange trees at a distance, the whole produce a pleasing effect.

The farmers and gardeners in the Netherlands are not burdened with a weight of taxes, enormous poor rates, nor the grievous exaction of tithes; causes which in England have operated to ruin so many thousands of its cultivators, and have driven its peasantry in such numbers to the western continent; the total amount of taxes do not exceed ten per cent. on the rentals.

Leases are sometimes granted for 27 years; the customary terms are 6, 9, or 27 years.

The result of my agricultural and horticultural observations amounts to this, that although England was indebted originally to the Netherlands for instruction, the pupil has far exceeded her instructors; they have been stationary, whilst she has made such rapid progress that they are now, at least, half a century behind her.

Y



My limits will not admit of entering into more minute details on this subject, and it will be required the less, as I purpose in an agricultural tour through Flanders, Brabant and the Southern districts, now in preparation to enter more fully into the subject.

## LETTER XX

### BRUSSELS.

If seven cities of Greece put in their respective claims to have been the birth-place of Homer, is it wonderful that several cities of the Netherlands, contend with Germany for the honour of giving birth to the inventor of the invaluable art of printing, which has diffused, and is still diffusing its benefits around the world.

Haarlem claims this honour in the person of Laurence Koster or Coster, who died in 1440, and who, it is asserted discovered this art some years before his death. Two copies of a work, entitled, *Speculum Salvationis*, are exhibited at Haerlem to support the claim.

Mayence or Mentz, contends for it in favour of John Guttenberg, assisted by his son-in-law Schaeffer, and John Faust or Fust. The first work by the new method of metallic types, is believed to have been the *Psalter*, dated August 14, 1457, which was followed by "*Durandi rationale Diviniorum*," 1459. Soon after appeared "*Catholicon Joannis Januensis*," which was followed by two



beautiful editions of the psalter; and, in 1462, by the vulgate edition of the Bible, which was began in 1450, and finished in 1460. Faust took a number of copies to Paris, upon offering them to sale for manuscripts, he was committed to prison under suspicion of dealing with the devil, nor could he procure his release until he had revealed the secret of his art.

Dr. Willis, of Oxford, who investigated this subject, reports as follows—"About the year 1450 the art of printing was invented, and practised in Germany; but whether first at Mentz or Haerlem, is undetermined; for it appears on an impartial enquiry, that those who had it in consideration, before it was brought to perfection, disagreeing among themselves, separated, and some of them at Haerlem, and others at Mentz, pursued the practice of their former employ at one and the same time."

Guttenberg is said to have attempted to establish this art at Strasburg, from 1436 to 1440. He was born at Mentz in 1400, and died there 1466, and seems to be entitled to the honour of being the original inventor, but his poverty compelled him to associate others with him in the execution of his project.

It was long thought that this invaluable art was introduced into England in 1471, by William Caxton, a mercer, who had a press in Westminster Abbey, until 1494; but a small book, of 41 leaves in quarto, entitled "Expositio Sancti Ieronomi in Simbolon, etc." was discovered in the public library at Cambridge, dated Oxford, 1468; by which Oxford has ever since claimed the honour of the first press, this book is supposed to have been printed by Frederic Corsellis.



Caxton resided for several years in the Low Countries, previous to his coming over to England, and published there a work, entitled “The Siege of Troy,” in French, dedicated to the duchess of Burgundy, sister to Henry IV. of England.

The first edition of the Bible in English was printed at Antwerp, under the direction of William Tyndal of Magdalen College Oxford, who having embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, went to Antwerp and printed his translation of the Scriptures, and sent the impression to England, which was speedily bought up there—he suffered martyrdom in 1536, at Vilvorde.

Mons. Des Roches, the historian of the early ages of this country, but not a native, in his enquiries into the origin of printing, asserts that Brabant has the best claim to this honour, and after some lengthened details on the subject he draws the following results:—

I. That the characters which constitute the modern system of printing, were invented at Mayence by Peter Schoeffer de Guernsheim, and that the first book printed with these characters was “*Rationale Durandi*,” 1459.

II. That the engraved characters in copper or other metals were invented by Guttenberg, Genfleis, Mentel and Faust, which served them for impressions of their Bibles without dates, and also other books, as “*Alexandri Galli Doctrinale Petri Hispani Tractatus Logici*. It is thought that these books were produced between 1440 and 1457, and that Fust and Schoeffer added for the first time the date and notice of the Printing Office to their Psalmorum Codex. The dates in certain books as “*De Conceptione*



*Immaculata B. Virg.*" 1314, and others are considered as false dates.

III. In 1442, the printers formed at Antwerp a society which made part of the brotherhood of St. Luke, unless they mis-state the date of their admission.

IV. Long before this epocha there existed in the Low Countries, printers on wood of books and figures, school books, and books of devotion; the most ancient examples that exist of them, give reason to think that they used moveable letters as well as fixed.

These books are without date, but the manner in which they are executed, clearly evince that they are anterior to all the works of Germany. The character of the whole, and the language in which they have been printed, prove that the Low Countries have the only just claim to them. Every thing favours the opinion that they belong to the 15th century.

Gibbon, the historian of Rome, observes in a note, in Chapter 26, " That after several years of anarchy and despotism, the dynasty of the Han of the northern regions of the eastern world, 205 B. C. was the æra of the revival of learning. The fragments of ancient literature were restored, the characters were improved and fixed, and the future preservation of books was secured by the useful invention of ink, paper, and the art of printing. Ninety seven years before Christ, Sematsien published the first History of China. His labours were illustrated, and continued by a series of one hundred and eighty historians. The substance of their works is still extant; and the most considerable of them are now deposited in the king of



France's library. (Vide the Chou-King, with the preface and notes of Mons. Guignes, Paris 1770, and several others.)

This may be correct so far as relates to the art of engraving plates: it cannot relate to the art of printing with moveable types, which could not have existed during so long a period without finding its way into Europe, at an earlier period than the fourteenth century.

The circumstance the most probable is, that which is advanced by the Rev. Wm. Morrison, the indefatigable and learned modern Chinese translator, who states, that "so early as the eleventh century, immoveable types for printing were made of clay, hardened by burning, and, about the same time, the people of Pelang, in Chekeans, used moveable types of lead."

Printing was first performed in Brussels, in 1478--and the first Gazette, published here in the French language, was in January 5, 1651.

What, though no Corinthian pillar has been erected to perpetuate the memory of him who first invented this most invaluable art, he has a monument in the heart of every friend of science, and a grateful posterity will never cease to pay to him their votive tribute of gratitude.

After the fire in 1731, which burnt down the palace, the books and manuscripts which were saved, were deposited in one of the subterraneous vaults. In 1754, they were removed into the great hall in the Rue d'Isabelle, then unoccupied; this was the commencement of the royal library of Brussels, which was made public on the 16th De-



cember, 1772, when Maria Theresa, the Empress Queen of Austria, by letters patent from Vienna, erected the Literary Society established at Brussels, in 1769, into a permanent body, under the title of "The Imperial and Royal Academy of Belles Lettres;" granting to the academicians, the distinctions and prerogatives, attached to the state of personal nobility, assigning them the rooms in the royal library, which she ordered to be opened also for the use of the public.

In article III. of its formation, it is declared, that it shall be composed of thirty-six academicians, of which ten shall be honorary. An annual meeting shall be held in every year to adjudge the two prizes in the classes of science, and of Belles Lettres, and fix on the questions for the following year; five volumes of their transactions have been published in quarto, which may be inspected during library hours, besides several volumes which contain the prize dissertations.

The library is placed in a square building, which was built in 1625, with an interior court, at the expense of the King of Spain, by order of the Infanta Isabella; and is opened to the public, from the 1st of April to the 15th of October, from nine in the morning until noon, and in the afternoon from three to half past five; the remainder of the year from nine in the morning until one. Thursday mornings and public holidays excepted.

For several years, during the French revolution, this institution ceased to exercise its functions. His Majesty, the King of the Netherlands, has re-established it by an edict of the 7th of May, 1816, under the title of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres; it consists of sixty



academicians of whom twelve are honorary members, and it has for its object to search into the sciences, physical and mathematical, ancient literature, history, laws, natural history, chemistry, geography, etc.

Public lectures are read every morning, except during the vacations, to which strangers may be admitted on proper applications to the professors. Mons. Le Baron de Feltz is the president, and Mons. Van Hulthem. the provisional secretary.

The following are some of the prize questions for the years 1819 and 1820. The dissertations are required to be written in Latin, French, Dutch or Flemish, and delivered free of expense before the 1st of February, 1819, to M. Van Hulthem, secretary of the Academy at Brussels. The society requires the utmost accuracy in all quotations; the editions and pages must be marked whence they are extracted. The authors names are not to be annexed to the dissertations, but to accompany them sealed up with the same mark.

Describe the different species of minerals which belong to the soil of the kingdom, with their several properties, with the indications of their localities, and the indications of each species, and name the several authors who have already treated thereof.

If there be an identity between the causes which produce the electrical phenomena, and those which produce galvanic phenomena, whence comes it that there is not found a perfect coincidence between the two?

Many modern authors believe the identity of chemical



and of galvanic forces. Is it possible to prove either the truth or the falsity of this opinion.

And in the class of history, they propose the two questions following for 1820.

Give an historical and critical report of the authors who have written best upon the Belgic history, from the commencement of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. It is required that the authors should indicate the sources whence the writers have borrowed, and that they should fix the degree of authority due to each.

The Netherlands have produced many distinguished latin poets. James Gruterus, under the feigned name of Ranuticus Gerus, has given us a curious collection of the most select poetical works of the Belgians, which had appeared until his time, under the title of *Deliciæ Poetarum Belgicorum Francof*, 1614—four volumes 12mo. Valere, André and Foppens, in their *Bibliotheca Belgica*, Sweertius in his *Athenæ Belgicæ*, Paquot in his *Memoires Littéraires*, Saxius in his *Onomasticon Literarium*, Baillet in the *Jugemens des Savans*, M. Coupe in his *Soirées Littéraires*, the authors of the *Biographie Universelle*, and many others have brought us acquainted with many of them.

At the invitation of a learned society of Holland, M. Jerome de Vries, has given in 1808 an interesting history of the Flemish and Dutch poets, but there is wanting a complete and accurate work on our latin poets. The academy desirous to bring forward in succession every branch of the literature of the Netherlands, so rich, and unfortunately so little known, request an historic and literary notice, in chronological order of the latin poets of the



Netherlands, with a critical examination of their poetical works.

The prize to be awarded for the best answer to each of these questions, will be a gold medal, weighing twenty-five ducats.

La Bibliotheque was originally instituted by the Duke of Burgundy, and contains many valuable manuscripts and books from his library, together with numerous other curious and rare manuscripts, missals and scarce specimens of the early art of printing, many of which are splendidly illuminated, or illustrated with miniatures, in a superior style; they exhibit a degree of science in delineations of costume and character, scarcely surpassed in modern art, and are in fine preservation, among others of the ninth century.

L'Evangile.

Flemish Bible, in 2 vols. 1360.

Liber Secretorum fidelium crucis de sanato, 1320.

La Somme des vices, 1450.

Histoire du Hainault par de Guise Ms. 3 vols. folio, 1460, with fine miniatures.

La Fleur des Histoires, 3 vols. 1470, ditto.

Pontifical Romanorum, 1470, superb.

Missale par order de Matthias Corvinus King of Hungary, 1485, elegant.

Psalterium, blue and gold.

Livres des Guerres.

Cantus Missæ, (ancient music.)

An ancient book of dancing, with the figures described.

A manuscript copy of the Koran, ancient.



Among many rare works are to be seen several fine specimens of the first books printed in the cities of the Low Countries, as follows:

First Flemish Bible—printed at *Delft*, 1477, 4to.

Dionysii de Leuwis, alias Rikel specdum couversionis peccatorum, Theodoricus Martens—*Alost*, 1473, 4to.

Petri de Crescentis opus ruralium commodorum,

Joannes de Westphalia, *Louvain*, 1474, folio.

Thesaurus pauperum, Theodoricus Martens, *Anvers*, 1476, folio.

Bocace du dechiet des nobles hommes et cleres femmes, Colard Mansion, *Bruges*, 1476, folio.

Les freres de la Vie commune, Arnoldi Gethoven Gnotosolitos, *Brussels*, 147, folio.

Rhetorica divina Guillermi.

Parisiensis, Arnoldus Cæsaris, *Ghent*, 1483, 4to.

Biblia sacrapolyglotta, 1514, and numerous copies of the sacred Scriptures in the Hebrew, the Malay and other languages.

Great numbers of the manuscripts and rare books of the public library were taken to Paris, and marked with the letter N. but are restored in splendid bindings, and are now inscribed with the letter W.

The library contains also several fine copies of the ancient fathers, and of the classics. The King of the Netherlands has lately sent several valuable additions thereto, and has testified his desire to maintain and to increase it.

Among other works for general reading or instruction will be found—



Denons Voyage dans la basse et la haute Egypt. Imp.  
Folio. 1802.

Hindoo Costumes. 10 Vol. Fol.

Voyage pittoresque de Naples et de Sicilæ. 5 Vol. 1781.  
Lavaters Physionomie.

Encyclopedie Françoise. 35 Vol.

Morier's Persia. 2 Vol.

Philosophical Transactions.

With numerous volumes on theology, laws, history, arts, sciences, and other subjects.

Monsieur Van Hulthem, the respectable secretary of the Bibliotheque, with a prompt attention, although a stranger, devoted a considerable portion of time, and took great pains to furnish me with every requisite information respecting the library, and to point out the several rare and curious manuscripts and books which it contains. In his private collection of prints, medals, and coins, are several rare articles. Among many others—

Speculum Conversionis Peccatorum, printed at Alost, 1473, 4to.

Speculum Nostra Salvationis, first edition, without date. Biblia Pauperum, complete, with 40 plates, Pfister, small folio, without date. Earl Spencer's copy has 17 plates only.

The laws are highly favourable to authors in the Netherlands, on delivering three copies of any work printed there to the proper officer, the copy right is vested in the author and his widow and heirs. Should the manuscript be stolen or lost, and another person publish it, the profits would still be vested in the author; and if published in



another country and brought into the Netherlands, the copies would be seized by the government, and sold for the benefit of the author or his family. No license of the press is necessary, but every author is responsible for his work, if it contains libellous or treasonable matter, the Government possesses a power of stopping the press by summary process.

In the Cabinet of Natural History are found specimens of fossils, minerals, beetles, shells, butter-flies, birds, reptiles, and the skin of the horse which carried off the Duke of Alva in safety, from the siege of Ostend; it bore him six miles after it had been shot in two places, the holes are seen in the skin; here is also the coat of mail of Charles I. of England. Among the mathematical instruments, are two small orreries, several air-pumps, electrical machines, magnets, optical illusions, and an ingenious surgical machine for the cure of contracted muscles.

Here also is to be seen the model of the ingenious Hydraulic machine erected on the ramparts between the Porte of Louvain and Namur, by means of which the city of Brussels is supplied with water. And in a passage on the north side of the square adjoining the library, is suspended a remarkably fine oak plank, about three feet wide at one end, and upwards of 90 feet in length, cut from a tree which grew within ten miles of Brussels, on the Louvain road, fifteen feet have been obliged to be cut from it, in order to fix it where it is, so that its whole length was 105 feet.

Free lectures are given from time to time on the higher branches of the mathematics, and on natural philosophy. Lectures are also given on medical science, and in one of the apartments of the Hotel de Ville, lessons are given



gratis in painting, sculpture and architecture. It is to be hoped, that the new order of things established in the Netherlands, will call forth some latent sparks of genius in literature and science; hitherto, they have little to boast, if we except Froisard, Cambray, and the voluminous author of the Lives of the Saints, in fifty volumes folio.

When we contemplate the stately edifice, or the lofty column, we know, that time will crumble the one into ruin, and hurl the other from its base; but when we peruse the volumes which transcendant genius has transmitted to posterity, time serves but to render them more venerable, and the study of them is daily calling down new blessings upon mankind; like the Phœnix, they rise from their ashes, and live through succeeding ages.

Let me exhort you to cultivate literature, whatever your occupation or destiny; it affords satisfactions which adversity can never deprive you of; you well know how it has cheered my path of life in those severe reverses which I have encountered.—Adieu.

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## LETTER XXI.

BRUSSELS.

RESUMING the highly interesting subject with which I concluded my last, I proceed to observe, that until the arrival of the Universities in the Southern provinces of the Kingdom, the public seminaries of instruction were in a very low state; they have undergone a complete revision, and new regulations for their organization have been adopted, which are published, and to which I refer you



for more minute details. The king's edict was issued 19th February, 1817, and announced, that the subordinate colleges were to be named the *Athénées*, which are established at Brussels, Maestricht, Bruges, Tournay, Antwerp, Luxembourg and Namur; in the latter will be established a chair of mineralogy and metallurgy.

The objects of instruction, more particularly attended to, are

The Greek and Latin languages.  
History—Geography—Mythology,  
Elements of Physics and Natural History,  
Mineralogy and Metallurgy.

A complete course of study is calculated to occupy six years.

The Commissary-General of the division is empowered, by a special commission, to inspect these colleges and to report to the police.

The new regulations commenced in October, 1817.

The Royal School at Brussels, in the Rue de Namur, now called *L'Athenee*, contains about 150 boarders, among which are 15 English, and about 200 day scholars. An annual distribution of prizes took place in this institution—in August 1817, it was made in the orange houses of the Botanic garden; after several days of public examination, as each youthful candidate came forward to receive his reward, the music played a flourish, it was an enlivening scene, calculated to awaken emulation even in the unsuc-



cessful; the principal prize, denominated, *La Prix d'Excellence*, consisted of a valuable set of books, and was obtained by Master Drewrey, an English youth. For several days after the distribution, itinerant musicians go from house to house of the successful youths, and play in expectation of reward.

There are three universities established in the Southern Provinces, at Louvain, Ghent, and Liege, which are empowered to confer degrees, and are open to the admission of Protestants and Roman Catholics, the objects of instruction are divided into five departments, theology, laws, medicine, mathematical and physical sciences, philosophy and Belles Letters. The degrees consist of candidates and doctors, the latter may also be conferred on strangers, who may merit it.

All the professors are public functionaries, and no one is received into either of the universities, until after he has attended the academical lessons with the temporary rector of the university as a student, and produced a certificate thereof.

To each university is appointed five persons as curators; the presidents are named by the king, and reside in the cities, where the universities are fixed.

Besides these instructions, there are numerous academies or schools for education in Brussels; three of which are under British superintendence, one for young ladies under the care of Mrs. Hawksley, with the assistance of her two daughters, situated in Rue de Berlaimont, one by the Rev. T. Prince, M. A. of Wadham College Oxford, for young gentlemen, opposite the church of St. Gudule,



and a third for young gentlemen, by Mr. Biggs at Kockelberg House, a short distance from the city. I can, with truth and disinterestedness, bear witness to the care which is taken of the morals and education of the several pupils who are placed under their care.

Mons. Le Roi, the painter, has established a school for design in Brussels, upon an excellent plan, his pupils have the liberty to attend his instructions for several hours every day.

The encouragement which literature, the arts and sciences receive, from the patronage of the illustrious family which reigns over these countries, must tend to produce corresponding effects.

In Article 226 of the Fundamental Laws of the Kingdom, it is expressly announced: That public instruction is one of the constant objects of government: the King requires an annual report to be made to the States General of the several universities and colleges.

228. The institutions of benevolence and of the education of the poor, are regarded as an object not less exciting the attentions of government; and the King demands a report on this head, to be made from time to time to the States General.

This is commencing, with great propriety, at the true source; the lower classes of the community, both in the cities and villages, afford the most glaring and melancholy proofs of the ignorance in which they are involved: and, whatever the enemies of instruction, and the friends of superstition may advance, the education of the poor must



form a component part of all well-regulated governments. It remains no longer a question of theory, it has long since been practically solved in our own country. Compare the peasantry of Scotland where all are educated, and almost every cottage contains its little library, with the peasantry of Wales, of Ireland, or even of England, and say among which the greatest degree of industry, frugality, obedience to the laws, virtue, piety and their usual attendants, happiness will be found.

The members of the several professions, and every shopkeeper are obliged to pay a sum for a patent, before they can exercise such profession or business, or commence any suit at law.

Intimately connected with this subject is the law, which regulates patent inventions, to secure an exclusive right to which for five years, the government receive 150 franks; for ten years 300 franks; and for fifteen years 650 or 750 franks; and for each transfer of property 9 franks, after which it claims the right of giving publicity to the invention; this law is injudicious, it checks genius and smothers many excellent inventions, which it should be the policy of every wise government to encourage as much as possible.

The Low Countries claim the honour of having been the cradle of the arts, and their history justifies the claim so far as extends to their revival in Europe after the chasm made by the dark ages. There was a period when they produced artists, whose works have received from posterity the just tribute of applause. At that period their commercial relations were very extensive, and the arts will be found generally to accompany successful commerce.



The cartoons of Raphael are said to have been designed by him for patterns for the tapestry of the Netherlands.

John Van Eyck, or John of Bruges, who died there in 1440, discovered, during his life time, by means of his skill in chemistry, the art of painting in oil colours. One of his pictures being taken to Italy, obtained him great honour. Anthony of Messina came to Flanders, and contracting a friendship with Van Eyck, obtained instruction in his art.

Antwerp has been peculiarly distinguished as having been the school of artists. In that city was exemplified the power of love, which, in the person of Quintin Metsys, transformed a blacksmith into a painter of renown. The Netherlands have to boast of Rubens, Vandyck, Teniers, Snyders, Paul Bril, Breughel. Champagne, Crayer, F. Floris, Frank Hals, Vander Meulen, and many others.

The government propose the restoration of the statue of the celebrated painter Quintin Matsys. According to the Latin and Flemish inscriptions, this artist died in 1529: the former asserts, that this monument was erected by posterity to his honour, an hundred years afterwards, and below is written:

*Connubialis amor de mulcibre fecit Appellum.*

A prodigy of the same kind was revived here about two years since; a picture was exhibited, representing a dead hare, suspended to a tree, some birds in different groups, and a basket of flowers. The artist's name was Wanters of this city, he was fifty years of age, and by profession, a polisher of diamonds. The execution of this picture ap-



appears more astonishing as this artist had never been instructed in the principles of drawing or of painting.

At a recent capital public sale of pictures at Antwerp, which was attended by a number of strangers, the inhabitants desirous of preserving the master-pieces of the Flemish school, purchased the principal paintings; the Roman Charity, by Rubens, at 10,000 florins, and three portraits, by Van Dyck, at 5,000, 7,000, and 8,000 florins.

Decimal Arithmetic was invented at Bruges in 1632, by Simon Steven, and diamonds were cut and polished there in 1489.

Weaving of tapestry was originally confined to these countries; a very extensive manufactory existed at Louvain, and another at Brussels, formerly. At the latter the six fine pieces of tapestry, exhibited annually at St. Gudule, were executed about thirty years ago. Carpeting, so much in esteem in England was first invented here. The Netherlands possess several modern painters of merit, but none whose works can enter into comparison with Rubens, Vandyke, Teniers, Ostade, and some few others which might be named. The liberal manner in which the several fine collections of paintings are laid open to public inspection, must have a natural tendency to improve the artists, if proper encouragement was given, and liberal prizes paid for their performances.

La Musée, near la Place Royale, consists of several rooms, which contain some fine specimens of the ancient masters; it is opened Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays in each week to the public; and artists who desire to make studies, have great facilities rendered them by ad-



dressing their request to the manager. It is a national institution under the direction of the mayor and municipality.

The principal boast of this gallery is the several works of Rubens, No. 58\*—42\*—50—60—68\*, and of Van Dyck, No. 2\*—5—14\*—48. Those marked with an asterisk have been returned from Paris. Had Rubens attained ideas of beauty and of grace, equal to the inexhaustible stores of his imagination, and the strength and harmony of his colouring, he would have ranked above all competition in the school of painting. An annual exhibition of modern artists is held alternately at Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent.

This Institution was originally founded by Charles Duke of Lorraine, and is aided in its funds by voluntary subscriptions, and by occasional donations. It is composed of upwards of five hundred members, among whom is the King, and many of the principal magistrates and nobility.

On the ceiling of the stair case which leads to the great rooms wherein the pictures are preserved, are painted the twelve signs of the Zodiac. At the foot a very fine statue of Hercules, executed in marble by Laurens Delvaux, commands attention. It is a noble work of art, the lesser decorations corresponding with the finer parts. The dead serpents have the marks of death strongly depicted in their forms and attitudes, this was destined also to be sent to Paris.

The Duke d'Arenberg, with great willingness, permits his mansion, and collection of pictures, and curiosities to be viewed. He has several fine specimens by Dietricy and other masters. Here is also a plan of part of his domains



carved in wood, in Alto Relievo; the several inequalities of surface appear as in nature.

The collection of pictures belonging to the late Mons. Conseiller Burtin, near the Church of Notre Dame de la Chapelle, at Brussels, consist principally of the Flemish and Dutch schools, with some few Italian pictures, selected with discrimination. For seven years, during the revolution, they were saved by the late Duke of Brunswick from spoliation, and restored to their late possessor, with some valuable additions. In consequence of his death they are intended for sale by auction, together with his collection of minerals, fossils, and other objects of Natural History.

I have now to direct your attention to the **MUSEE-LUPUS.**

This Museum, by the variety of objects which it embraces, in each class of which is found articles unique and precious in their kind; is a repertory of the most curious monuments of the sciences, belles lettres, and the fine arts.

It presents in its extent, its richness, its arrangements, and its preservation, a most beautiful and magnificent coup-d'œil—it consists of eighteen parts.

I.—D'Une *Claviculare*, or curious collection of keys, antique, gothic, and ancient, of all ages, of all countries, and of all forms, particularly an unique Egyptian key in bronze.

II.—D'Une *Sigillaire* or collection of seals, equally unique, which consists of matrices, of seals and impres-



sions; and annular seals, antique, gothic, and ancient. Amongst these is seen a Grecian ring, the metal and even the stone of which is almost worn away by time. It may be considered as the most antique ring known.

III.—A collection of caskets, gothic and ancient, of divers workmanship. Among the caskets is the royal casket of Philippe de Valois.

IV.—Various rings, antique, gothic, and ancient. We distinguish among the rings an enormous papal one of bronze gilt, in the center of which, painted in encaustic on copper, is a miniature of the virgin, instead of a fine stone.

V.—Cameos and precious stones, antique and gothic.

VI.—*Manuscripts*, antique, gothic and ancient, bearing date from the third to the seventeenth century; many of which are illuminated with miniatures upon vellum, among them are many of the classics and unpublished works; they are for the most part richly bound and fastened with gold clasps.

VII.—Several ancient books printed upon vellum with miniatures and many others rare, on paper with and without plates.

VIII.—*Medallions* and *Medals*—antique, gothic and ancient. There are various medals; an unique of Victorine represented with a casket, on the reverse Posthumus the elder, which proves that Victorine was his wife, and not the mother of Victorin.



IX.—Small Ironzes, antique, gothic, and ancient. Among the bronzes is a small Priapus Barbarus, an unique of the greatest antiquity.

X.—Arms and armour, antique, gothic, and ancient. Among these is the enormous antique sword of the famous giant THOMAS OSTHOTHER, whose name is inscribed on one of the sides of the blade, and on the other side are these initials:—I. N. R. I.

XI.—Enamels, antique, gothic and ancient. Among the enamels are two small portraits on fine gold, very ancient. One is that of Clothaire III. King of France, and the other of the Queen Cathilda his wife, daughter of Edbald, son of Ethelbert King of England.

XII.—Drawings and embroideries.

XIII.—Miniatures, gothic and ancient.

XIV.—Pictures, gothic and ancient. There is a small picture which merits attention, painted on black marble representing Saint Cecilia dead; two women are engaged in washing her wounds. This picture is of the ancient Italian school, and so fine that it surpasses the productions of the greatest masters in this branch of the art.

XV.—Sculpture, antique, gothic, and ancient.

XVI.—Engravings, chased works, antique, gothic and ancient.

XVII.—Numerous objects of Natural History. In the



objects of Natural History is the handsomest, largest, and very antique pair “des Noyaux osseux des cornes d'Aurochs,” in Latin, “Urus,” and in French, “bœuf Elephant.”

XVIII.—Miscellaneous specimens. In this collection is a small Host in silver, which from the date it bears, (D. G. 83.) is the most ancient as well as the finest specimen of gothic jewellery. The Chevalier Primat Lupus, possesses also the most highly finished of antique intaglios. It is Grecian on sardonyx, and represents Achilles dragging the body of Hector round the walls of Troy. He has also a very magnificent Faustine; it is engraved in relief on a large white onyx, oval.

This highly valuable Museum has been recently brought into Brussels, and its continuance here any length of time, is uncertain.

Le Chevalier Primat Lupus, to whom it belongs, in the most liberal and condescending manner, invites the Cognoscenti and amateurs of all countries to inspect it; he has authorised me to express his peculiar partiality towards the English nation, for to use his own words, “I have always found that they cultivate the Sciences, the Belles Lettres, and the Arts, with the greatest ardour and ability, and are, in general, the truest friends.”

I feel confident that my countrymen will be gratified by the estimation in which they are held by this highly respectable and intelligent nobleman.

This Museum has been accumulating for several generations in his family—after his death it will probably be



disposed of, long may he continue to enjoy the contemplation of it; but, whenever the period arrives that it shall be to be purchased, I hope that the British nation may have the offer of it, to add to the stores of the British Museum; it is truly unique.

In this magnificent collection are the following curious and interesting articles:—

A whole length of Cleopatra, by Correggio.

Specimens of oil paintings in the earliest infancy of the art.

A most beautiful carving in *Slate*, representing the crucifixion; in this inimitable piece of sculpture, in which a number of figures are introduced, the expressions of grief and horror in the countenances of the characters attendant on our Saviour, are delineated in so excellent a manner considering the fragility of the material, as must strike every beholder with admiration.

Parts of the imperial diadem of Constantine, consisting of three most beautiful Onyxes in their original gold mountings, representing a Roman eagle, trophies of conquest, and the head of our Saviour. The two former, from the beauty of their execution, are concluded to have been executed at or about the time of Augustus, the last no doubt was added by Constantine himself upon the occasion of his receiving the Christian faith.

A beautiful gold ring, with the head of Calphurnia in Onyx, supposed to have belonged to Julius Cæsar.



A most beautiful Onyx bearing the head of Zenobia.

A ruby weighing fifty-four and a half carats.

A numerous collection of keys from the earliest ages, including specimens of Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Punic workmanship.

A large assortment of ancient seals.

A library consisting of 280 MS. on vellum, containing some works most splendidly illuminated with miniatures, also some very ancient copies of the classics.

Previous to the French revolution, the Netherlands possessed numerous other fine collections, many of which have found their way into Great Britain.

The following are the names of the principal modern artists, who are now exercising their professions in the Netherlands :

Autissier, miniature painter, Brussels.

Assche, A Van, sculptor, do.

Berre, J. B. animals, Antwerp.

Bertels, J. F. sculptor, Brussels.

Bonnevie, E. J. architect, do.

Blar, L. J. Du, lithography, do.

Bout, Charles, sculptor, do.

Braemt, J. J. medalist, do.

Boens, Leopold, portraits, do.

Blomaerts, H. portraits and landscape, do.



- Brice, J. portraits and landscape, do.  
 Cels, C. historical, do.  
 Coene, C. historical, do.  
 Colpaert, P. portrait, do.  
 Du Corror, landscapes, Ath.  
 Despretz, L. flowers and fruit, Brussels.  
 Despretz, flowers, Brussels.  
 Ducorron, landscape, Ath.  
 Due, portraits, Bruges.  
 François, (1st professor of the academy,) historical, Brussels.  
 Florent, C. landscape, do.  
 Feyens, medallist, do.  
 Fromiet, Mademoiselle S. portraits, do.  
 Geirnaert, portrait, Ghent.  
 Godecharle, sculptor, Brussels.  
 Gystelle, Mademoiselle, portrait, do.  
 Harens, historical, Antwerp.  
 Hellemans, P. J. landscapes, do.  
 Heyndrickx, portrait, do.  
 Hermans, historical, do.  
 Hess, portrait, do.  
 Hodges, C. H. portrait, Amsterdam.  
 Hoegarde, Mademoiselle, landscape, do.  
 Janseens, architect, do.  
 Jacobs, sculptor, do.  
 Johns, miniature, Brussels.  
 Koerkoek, shipwrecks, Middlebourg.  
 Kogels, landscape, Brussels.  
 Krauze, S. A. sea-pieces, Hague.  
 Lagarenne, Mademoiselle, portrait, Brussels.  
 Landtsheer, historical, do.



- Leclercq, sculptor, Brussels.  
 Lefebune, landscape, do.  
 Lens, historical, do.  
 Louyet, Mademoiselle, portrait, do.  
 Maes, J. B. L. portrait, do.  
 Maillart, landscape, Vilvorde.  
 Malaise, portraits, Brussels.  
 De Mets, Mademoiselle, etchings, Gand.  
 Monceau, F. Du, fruit and flowers, Brussels.  
 Moritz, interiors, Amsterdam.  
 Navez, (at Rome) historical, Brussels.  
 Nicolie, interiors, Antwerp.  
 Noel, P. historical landscape, Brussels.  
 Noter, P. F. De, churches, Ghent.  
 Odevaere, historical, Brussels.  
 Paelinck, historical, Ghent.  
 Parent, architect, Valenciennes.  
 Pavillion, Du, portrait, Brussels.  
 Pauwels, J. B. portrait, do.  
 Pieters, P. H. architect, Ghent.  
 Pletinck, statuary, Brussels.  
 Poorte, H. Van Du, landscape, Antwerp.  
 Regemorter, Van, medallist, Antwerp.  
 Roi, J. B. De, landscape and cattle, Brussels.  
 Schouman, M. sea-pieces, Dordrecht.  
 Simon, engraver, Brussels.  
 Solwyns, sea-pieces, Antwerp.  
 Speeckaert, dead game, Brussels.  
 Stapleaux, portraits, do.  
 Stevens, C. F. J. historical, do.  
 Thirion, J. G. landscape, do.  
 Thomassin, A. portraits, do.



- Thys, Mademoiselle, portraits, do.  
 Thys, J. F. interiors, do.  
 Tour, Madame, interiors, do.  
 Tour, A. De La, portraits, do.  
 Turkene, H. historical, do.  
 Van Bre, historical, Antwerp.  
 Verhelst, C. P. portraits, do.  
 Verly, F. architect, do.  
 Vermandele, J. J. bas relief, Ghent.  
 Vervloet, F. churches, Malines.  
 Voordecker, landscape, Brussels.  
 Willenis, Amelie, portrait, do.  
 Wittman, P. J. decorator, do.  
 Woensel, Mademoiselle, P. V. fruit and flowers, do.

There are besides these several artists of eminence, whose names I have not been able to obtain to include in this List.

The Committee of the Royal Society of Painting at Brussels, considering that M. M. Lens historical painter, Godecharle statuary, and de Roi landscape and cattle painter have formed in Brussels, schools from which several eminent painters have issued, have resolved to reward with a medal of honour each of these distinguished artists.

Jean Baptiste Rousseau died at Brussels in 1741, after a long residence there.

This letter contains so much interesting matter, that I shall not apologize for its length.



## LETTER XXII.

BRUSSELS.

THE world has existed long, but wisdom is slow of growth, and mankind have much to learn; there are some philosophers, indeed, who not satisfied with the narrative of creation, attempt like the Chinese, to extend the age of the world to millions of years: but for what cause I know not, except to proclaim a greater extent of human folly. Six thousand years have nearly expired, and how little has been effected! How much is yet to do! How many ridiculous prejudices remain to be subdued. In some countries, trade and commerce are deemed servile engagements, in others merchants are princes, and ranked among the honourable of the earth: when wisdom is universal, every man will be respected whatever his rank or occupation in life, in proportion only as he conducts himself honourably, virtuously, and usefully.

Commerce commenced in Asia, the Phenicians, the merchants of Tyre, traded with the whole of the world then known, and Tyre and Sidon were renowned: by their natural situation they united Asia to Europe. Alexandria afterwards became the key of Indian commerce by means of the Red Sea; and Carthage was a great commercial nation. The states of Italy, Venice, Genoa, Florence and Pisa, were in turn the principal emporiums of trade with Europe, and acquired great riches and celebrity.

The city of Hamburg was founded by Charlemagne; it



united with Lubec in the 12th century, to form the celebrated Hanseatic league for the protection and extension of commerce. Sixty of the principal commercial cities of Europe were united in this league, among which were included Ostend, Antwerp and Bruges; the latter was fixed upon to be the great depôt for naval stores, and the Italian merchants brought there also the rich treasures of India. This league had its regular code of laws, and became of such great importance, that it was courted and feared by the most powerful nations. In 1301, Philip le Bel, surprised at the opulence of Bruges, on his visit to that city, exclaimed, "I thought I was the only King in Flanders, here are a hundred kings." Writers of the sixteenth century speak in raptures of the magnificent carpets, the rich satins, velvets, damasks, woollens and embroideries of the Low Countries.

The Count of Flanders in 1301, revoked many of the privileges previously granted to commerce, and after the tumults which agitated the Low Countries, many of the manufacturers removed to England; from Louvain in particular. The rapid improvements in the manufactures of Britain, the great increase of her commerce and foreign relations, the discovery of the southern passage to the East Indies, and of the Western continent, all conspired, in the sixteenth century, to turn the streams of commerce into new channels.

In the beginning of that century Bruges declined, and Antwerp increased in its consequence. The river Scheldt was so crowded with large vessels, that they could not be discharged quickly enough, and all kinds of East India goods, as well as those of other countries, abounded there; the English had a factory there.



In 1316, the English carried on a greater commerce with the Netherlands than with the whole world besides; she sent her wool to be manufactured into broad cloth; this commerce, so advantageous to the Low Countries, continued for many years: and although it was occasionally broken in upon by ruptures of short duration, between the governments, it does not appear to have interrupted long their commercial relations. In 1446, a treaty was entered into between the Duke of Burgundy and the King of England, with a most unlimited extent of traffic, artillery and gunpowder were the only articles excepted. Scarcely a nation in Europe but had its Consul and storehouses in Bruges; and the Low Countries attained a most extraordinary degree of splendour.

From the period of the death of Charles the Bold, before Nancy in Lorraine, in 1477, the commerce of the Netherlands began to decline; Charles the Fifth and his successor contributed very powerfully to hasten its destruction; by their bigotry, superstition, intolerance and persecutions, they drove away the manufacturers and the merchants to other nations, and depopulated the Low Countries.

The immense fortunes said to have been accumulated by individuals at this period, almost exceeds belief. Charles the Fifth, having expressed his wish to dine with a rich merchant of Antwerp named Daens, a sumptuous repast was provided; the merchant is reported to have thrown into the fire, at the close of the entertainment, a bill of 2,000,000 of ducats, which he had lent the emperor, observing, I am fully repaid by the honor your Majesty has done me this day. The Emperor replied—



“The nobility ruin me, men of science instruct me, it is  
 “merchants who enrich me.

In 1522, the Emperor, with 180 sail of vessels, joined the English fleet, under the command of the Earl of Surry.

The introduction of the Inquisition in 1550 into the Netherlands, contributed greatly to the downfall of their commercial consequence. Camden, in his History of Queen Elizabeth, states, that in 1564, the trade of England with the Netherlands, amounted annually to twelve millions of ducats, five millions of which were for cloth alone. In 1584, the Spaniards shut up the navigation of the Scheldt, which gave a death blow to the commerce of Antwerp and the Low Countries, and Amsterdam rose upon their ruins.

At the several periods of 1496, 1604, and 1630, several other commercial treaties, were entered into between these countries and Great Britain, which were renewed by the treaty at Vienna in 1731.

In 1719, when the Netherlands became subject to the House of Austria, an attempt was made to revive commerce by the establishment of a company trading to the East Indies, which so excited the jealousy of other European states, that it was abandoned in 1731.

The following is copied from an authentic document of the amount of imports and exports to and from England and the Netherlands at two distant periods, in sterling money:



|                     | Imp. into Brit. | Exp. from Brit. |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| From 1700 to 1701-- | 65,123 19 2     | 270,566 6 6     |
| 1754 1755--         | 91,623 14 1     | 463,173 19 9    |

In 1703, the Chamber of Commerce at Brussels was instituted.

The Emperor Joseph II. desirous to revive the commerce of the Netherlands in 1786, made Ostend a free port, improved the harbour, and endeavoured, but in vain, to obtain from the Dutch the free navigation of the Scheldt.

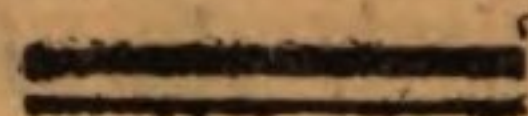
During the late revolutionary war the commerce of the Netherlands experienced the greatest stagnation, the grass grew in the streets of Brussels, and many other of their principal cities, and the rents of houses were considerably reduced; the decrees of Napoleon had nearly produced ruin to the commerce of the Netherlands; in their internal intercourses some articles advanced to an enormous price. Sugar and coffee were sold at seven, and even ten francs per pound. Peace is restored, the commercial relations with Great Britain and the other nations of Europe, are happily renewed: a new tariff has been published of the rates at which the several articles of merchandize may be imported, which varies from one to ten, and even in some cases to thirty-five per cent.

Feeling, with other countries, the dreadful effects of a long protracted war, there is no doubt but that a great stagnation prevails in many branches of manufactures, particularly in cotton, and that many hundreds of workmen are out of employ, but this evil is the same in all other countries. Peace is not a magician with its wand,



to change desolation into prosperity at a touch. Time and patience are necessary to restore every thing to its proper level, when it will appear that the relations which subsist between Great Britain and the Netherlands, will be found mutually advantageous.

My next letter will probably conclude the observations which I shall have to make on trade and commerce.



### LETTER XXIII.

BRUSSELS, JULY 10, 1817.

LACE constitutes a material article of trade in the Netherlands. It employs a great number of hands in most of the principal cities, and is brought to great perfection.

Brussels lace obtains the highest prices, the patterns are the most elegant, and it is consequently most in demand; but considerable quantities are made at Mechlin, Ghent, Bruges, and other cities. An ounce of the finest thread for making the Brussels lace is worth two hundred francs or ten Napoleons, about eight pounds sterling, more valuable than gold of the same weight. The best flax grows near Courtrai, and at Soigny, and Braine la-leud. Children begin at six and seven years of age to work at lace making; good workwomen can earn ten francs each day in making the fine laces.



Amongst the manufacturing concerns of the city of Brussels, the lace fabrics of M. Antoine Troyaux deserve notice, for elegance of design, strength and durability: he has received the sanction and patronage of their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Kent and Cambridge, and the Princess Elizabeth of Hesse Hombourg: the magnificent lace of the dresses in which they appeared at Court after their respective marriages were manufactured by him. He employs a great number of hands, many of which may be seen employed in making the lace at the manufactory, Rue de Parchemin, Brussels, near the Park.

Considerable quantities of flax are also grown in other parts of the Netherlands, which are manufactured into linen of excellent quality, some of which is very fine and durable. This is not what is known in England as Holland linen. Cambrics are also manufactured here.

Tobacco is grown in very considerable quantities, and manufactured for use mixed with foreign. Here are also manufactories of paper, paper hangings, cloths, soap, starch, porcelain, printed calicoes, cotton, worsted stockings, and at Namur, of tools and cutlery. The black silk, and the dye of Antwerp, and the bleaching grounds of Ghent are much celebrated.

England receives from the Netherlands grain, flax, seeds, linen, cheese, butter, books, pictures, prints, and supplies them with blankets, flannels, stuffs, cotton stockings, tools, cutlery, etc. The balance of trade is in favour of Great Britain.

In the Netherlands are several paper mills and manufactories for ornamental papers. The paper hangings are



shewy, many of them in superior taste, and remarkably cheap. Pasteboard, writing paper and leather, are far inferior to the English. Broad cloths are as dear as in England, but better in colour, and durable, they wear well to the last; and the stuffs made at Liege are said to rival the English, particularly the kerseymeres. Furniture is very moderate in price, and elegant. The principal trade of Antwerp is in West India produce, diamonds, pictures, cloths, silks, muslins, leather, tobacco, oil, cloth, etc. her bleaching grounds are esteemed to be very complete.

Labour is so very low, that linens are rendered cheaper than in Britain, and printed linens also, except where science and taste are requisite, and where numerous colours are combined. The manufacturers do not in general give encouragement to genius in their workmen, they are all paid the same price nearly, and consequently improvements go on very slowly. Linen for sheeting and shirting is excellent in quality, and moderate in price, but the manufactured cottons are far inferior to those of Great Britain.

The Journal de Gand of the 19th of July, 1817, speaking of some trifling expected advance on cotton, observes:

“ That we ought with freedom and regret to say, this  
 “ hope of advance is chimerical. How shall we be en-  
 “ abled to sell our national merchandize at a fair price,  
 “ when on all sides we are inundated with foreign manu-  
 “ tures, those of London and of Manchester being offered  
 “ at from 25 to 30 per cent. lower than our own.”

If these observations had applied to the linen manufactories of the Netherlands they would have had force, those are the staple manufactories, and still continue to flourish.



Cotton is not the staple produce, those manufactories have only been introduced in opposition to England during the late war, and cannot rival her; the higher the duty that may be imposed, the greater the temptation to evade it. The manufacturers of all countries viewing their individual interests solely, might make similar complaints.

Tournay has long been celebrated for its manufactures. It is situated on the confines of France, and the Scheldt runs through it. It still possesses some considerable concerns in potteries, earthenware, stockings, flax-spinning, and carpeting, several of which are in great activity; and in its environs considerable rocks of lime stone are found, which produce an excellent cement, or species of terras, much used in resisting water; and the burnt lime is used in the southern province to manure both arable and grass lands. The blue linen for frocks, worn by the peasantry in the Netherlands, is made here.

The duty on lace introduced into England, is so very high, that the revenue of Britain derives little benefit from it; the article is convenient to conceal, and the temptation to evade the duty so great, that much is annually conveyed into England. Considerable quantities of Swiss linens, in gowns and shawls particularly, are sold here. The colours are excellent, and manufactured to suit the soap of this country, and keep their colours better than the printed cottons of Britain.

At Oudenarde is a manufactory for the cotton Bandanas, on a similar plan to one in Scotland, and to another in England.

Britain might obtain large supplies of timber from the



Netherlands, but from the time of Charles II. until the present, the importation of it has been prohibited, perhaps with a view to keep up a more valuable nursery for seamen, which has ever been most judiciously kept in view, and upon which her very existence, as an independent state, materially depends.

The leather is far inferior to that of England, which may be owing to an inferior mode of manufacturing it, or perhaps the oak bark does not possess the same strong qualities as it does in that country.

Those articles in the treaty of peace which regulate the commercial intercourses between this country and Great Britain, have excited great discontent in all the persons interested. A tariff it is apprehended might be agreed upon, much more advantageous and satisfactory to both countries.

In confirmation of that article in the treaty of peace, which cedes the island of Java to the King of the Netherlands, on the 19th of August 1816, it was formally given up to a special commission appointed to take possession of it on his behalf; a proclamation was issued, and le Baron Van de Capellen, appointed the Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the land and sea forces east of the Cape of Good Hope. Two fleets have already sailed there, and another to the Island of Curacco. How far a distant foreign commerce may operate to expand the ideas and give enlarged notions of mercantile relations to the merchants of these cities, I presume not to fortel. It will be impossible for Belgium to become a great commercial nation without more enlarged and liberal notions, aided by extensive capitals.



Ostend and Antwerp are the only seaports of any consequence throughout the whole line of coast. Several vessels formerly sailed from the former for the East Indies. Ostend imports also considerable supplies of articles from the Baltic, as hemp, iron, and tar, and also various British manufactures. From this port considerable quantities of poultry, game and fruit find their way into England.

Contraband trade is carried on to a considerable extent both to and from Ostend; and the manner in which duties are charged on merchandize, or other articles, proves a source of great emolument to the officers employed. If the importer has undervalued them, and they, in consequence are seized, the government derives little advantage thereby, the seizing officer is most benefitted.

Bruges being an inland city, is limited in its commerce, but the canal that runs through it from Ostend to Ghent, gives it the advantage of considerable transit trade; and great quantities of lace are made there of a strong texture. It has few manufactories, its quays are very commodious; their extent confirms all that has been said of the ancient splendour of this city. At present it exhibits little vigour or activity, and is greatly dependent upon the reciprocal wants of its inhabitants; but some considerable amount of money exchanges are done here.

Ghent is also an inland city, but by means of its intercourse by its canals, and its vicinity to the confluence of the rivers of the Scheldt, the Lys, and some other smaller streams, it connects itself with Bruges, Courtray, Tournay, Ath, Brussels, Dendermonde, (or Tirmonde) and Antwerp, and becomes a considerable depôt. It still continues



celebrated for its bleaching grounds, and has also several cotton manufactories, tanneries, lace makers, etc.

Brussels, as the capital of the Netherlands concentrates principally those concerns which are connected with luxury. It has several carpet manufactories, glass-houses, coach-makers, lace-makers, cotton-manufacturies, tanneries, and other extensive concerns. Artificial flowers are made here in very great perfection, many of them so correctly imitate nature both in flower and foliage, that even on close inspection the eye will be sometimes deceived. The Belgian ladies are fond of this sort of ornament in their hats and bonnets, and when judiciously placed it is elegant, but it is worn here in such considerable quantities, and sometimes so ill chosen as to produce a contrary effect.

A manufactory for painted porcelain china is brought to great perfection here, the designs are elegant, and the execution masterly. The porcelain is imported from France, white, and painted in Brussels.

Antwerp, although it enjoys the advantage of having the Scheldt opened, cannot expect to attain her ancient greatness; at that period Belgium had very few rivals and double her present population; every European state is now her rival: a foreign trade is recommencing, but at a very gradual rate, there are but few vessels belonging to the port, and little or no ship-building. Great quantities of Baltic produce are brought in, viz. hemp, flax, iron, and from the Western Continent, hides, tobacco, coffee, sugar and rum. From the Mediterranean, wine and fruit, and from the East, tea and spices.



The number of commercial establishments are at present about three hundred; but they entertain such a jealousy of all strangers, and are so unacquainted with the great maxims of extensive commerce, that Amsterdam will long maintain her superiority. During the short peace of Amiens the foreign trade of the Netherlands was considerable.

The merchants and traders live in the most frugal manner, if they obtain but little they spend but little, and great failures are rare, although on the exchange at Antwerp and at Bruges, a considerable extent of exchange business is effected on small profits but large returns. Great part of the money business of the Continent centers there.

The sales of property in lands, houses, furniture and other articles, are principally effected by notaries, brokers or auctioneers; an officer attends on the behalf of government to take the account of the duty; but in general the taxes are collected here at a trifling expense, instead of gathering them from house to house, notice is given of their being due, and every person who is chargeable thereto is obliged to take the money to the office of the collector.

Every European state of any consequence has its consul at Antwerp. Great Britain for the first time, in the person of the Honourable Robert Annesley.

Antwerp suffers considerably in its commerce by the injudicious regulations relative to the import duties; these have operated most injuriously, driving the ships to Hamburgh and other ports; and also from other impediment and unnecessary delays at the Custom House.



The magnificence of many of the ancient houses at Antwerp, both externally and in their costly interior decorations, most powerfully confirm all that has been observed of the opulence and grandeur of the Netherlands in former ages.

The commerce of the country is carried on by specie, and bills of exchange; here are no national bank notes, or national banks. The specie of France and Holland is current here, in pieces of upwards of thirty different values, which create great confusion. A new national coinage is said to be in great forwardness, and is very much needed.

The 109 article of the Congress of Vienna, declares that the navigation of every river from its source to the mouth shall be free. Antwerp by its situation possesses great advantages, it seems to have been placed by nature as the key to the interior of Brabant, Flanders, Germany and Switzerland; its commerce has suffered considerably since the peace, by certain disputes at the Custom House. Those who engage in business of any sort in the Netherlands, should previously take out a patent or annual license so to do, or they will render themselves liable to heavy penalties and disabilities, which are strictly enforced.

The Netherlands are well situated for an extensive transit trade to all the inland states of the Continent; a branch of trade which promotes a vast amount of industry, and leaves certain profits without risk; the whole of the United Netherlands are most advantageously situated for the purposes of commerce. The fine rivers which convey to



them the various productions of the south of Europe, serve also to transport their own manufactures; whilst the extent of northern sea coast which they possess, and their several maritime ports connect them intimately with Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, and the north of Europe, and although it cannot be possible they should again attain the great eminence which they maintained in the 15th century, whilst they have such powerful kingdoms to rival them, yet a few years of peace may enable them to increase greatly their commercial relations, with all the benefits attendant thereon.

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## LETTER XXII.

BRUSSELS.

THE main object to be kept in view in all systems of political economy, should be to generate and increase human happiness. The French and English writers on this subject are known here. Adam Smith's treatise is translated into French. But political pamphlets excite the greatest interest; on such subjects it is not unusual to publish and dispose of large editions of approved works, few other literary productions meet with encouragement.

I have already noticed to you the great fertility of the Netherlands; abundance is highly favourable to population, and it will be found therefore to be greatly on the increase. The population of several of the principal provinces, from the latest reports is as follows:



### PROVINCE OF S. BRABANT.

|                            |   |   |   |         |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---------|
| Brussels, and its environs | . | . | . | 212,429 |
| Louvain, do.               | . | . | . | 134,196 |
| Nivelles, do.              | . | . | . | 95,024  |

### PROVINCE OF ANTWERP, WITHOUT ITS CANTONMENTS.

|           |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Antwerp   | . | . | . | . | . | 56,318 |
| Malines,  | . | . | . | . | . | 16,072 |
| Turnhout, | . | . | . | . | . | 8,065  |
| Louvain,  | . | . | . | . | . | 20,613 |
| Nivelles  | . | . | . | . | . | 7,016  |

### PROVINCE OF S. FLANDERS.

|            |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Ghent      | . | . | . | . | . | 60,775 |
| Oudenaude, | . | . | . | . | . | 5,084  |
| Tirmonde,  | . | . | . | . | . | 5,776  |
| Ecclo,     | . | . | . | . | . | 6,269  |

### PROVINCE OF W. FLANDERS.

|           |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Bruges,   | . | . | . | . | . | 33,632 |
| Ypres,    | . | . | . | . | . | 15,148 |
| Courtray, | . | . | . | . | . | 13,572 |

### PROVINCE OF HAINAULT.

|            |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Mous.      | . | . | . | . | . | 20,217 |
| Tournay,   | . | . | . | . | . | 22,380 |
| Charleroi, | . | . | . | . | . | 5,066  |



The population of the Netherlands, as near as I can ascertain it, is about 5,500,000 persons.

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Holland and its dependencies about | 2,000,000 |
| Belgium and Flanders . . . . .     | 3,500,000 |
|                                    | -----     |
|                                    | 5,500,000 |

The annual returns for the city of Brussels for the year 1816, state : Marriages, 579 ; Births, 5128 ; Deaths, 2808.

It argues very favourably for the healthiness of the city, that the several ages of the twenty-nine persons who died here between the 29th of December 1816, and 2d of January 1817, added together and divided by twenty-nine leaves the average of age, thirty-five, a great average for the inhabitants of a city ; two persons were turned of eighty, and seven under one year old.

The prices of grain have been so unusually high in 1816, that I record them as they were reported, January 3, 1817.

Francs.

|              |         |                     |
|--------------|---------|---------------------|
| Wheat . . .  | 18. 87. | Le demi-hectolitre. |
| Rye . . .    | 13. 86. | do.                 |
| Barley . . . | 9. 13.  | do.                 |
| Oats . . .   | 5. 12.  | do.                 |
| Buck Wheat   | 11. 35. | do.                 |

The lands and industry of the Netherlands are not encumbered with tythes and poor rates, which press so heavily on the people of England ; the poor here are not provided for by law ; the streets of the principal cities are



crowded with beggars, who are very importunate. There cannot exist a doubt but that the extent of misery is very great; a large proportion of it, however, may be considered as springing from the combination of the same causes which have produced similar effects throughout the Continent of Europe, from its northern shores to the Mediterranean; the late protracted and ruinous war has pressed severely on the people. The sums which the several governments have drained from them, have been withdrawn from manufactures and commerce; compelled to pay their several quota of contributions, they have not had wherewith to indulge in the comforts and luxuries of life. This has caused a great stagnation in commerce, thrown a number of people out of employ, and in many cases, compelled them to seek alms. It should be also considered that the change which must necessarily be produced by the return of peace, after a war of such duration and inveteracy, must inevitably have occasioned a revulsion, which, in numerous cases, has been the cause of great ruin and misery. Add to these the calamitous season of 1816, which prevailed so universally, and we are no longer at a loss to account for the accumulated distresses which we witness. Another observation strikes me forcibly on this subject; the beggars are principally strong healthy persons, capable of earning a livelihood by labour, were they to seek after it, or very young children trained to begging, and the notes of supplication are so similar, in such tones, as give reason to suspect that followed as a trade here as it is in England; and if report says true, it is not an unsuccessful one. A very small proportion of supplicants are aged or unable to work; those are ever real objects of commiseration.

It would protract my letter to an unreasonable length,



to detail to you the strong arguments against any laws for the provision of the poor, except indeed for very old age. Let national schools of education be established in every village, where strict principles of morality, industry, frugality and piety, shall be instituted. Let indolence and vice be punished, let saving banks be established at the public expense, and with public security. And if local circumstances shall at any time throw a great number of hands out of employ, let government be ready to set on foot some great undertaking, some extensive canal, some valuable structure, some new road, or convert the great heaths or woods into cultivated lands, and the benefits to a nation will be incalculable. Scotland has no poor laws, and very few poor, the humblest of her peasantry feel somewhat of a virtuous independent national character.

But although there are no poor laws in the Netherlands, the spacious and ancient convent of the benedictines, near Ixelles, is converted into a poor house, in which are upward of eight hundred persons of various ages, and of both sexes, with necessary attendants. It contains numerous court yards well supplied with water, and a character of neatness which is praiseworthy; it is supported by, and does great credit to the government, it is denominated *Le Dépôt de Mendicité du Brabant, Meridional, ci-devant l'Abbaye de la Cambre habité par les Benedictines.*

Rheumatisms, declines, and the typhus fever, are the disorders most prevalent in Brussels, in the lower parts of the city more especially, which may be easily accounted for. At Brussels there is a school of medicine, and public lectures are regularly read on that subject, but many of the ancient prejudices still exist among the practitioners;



the fee for each visit of a physician is so trifling, that it is not likely to call forth the exertions of superior genius.

The law ordains, that within a few days after the birth of every child, the parents or friends of such child shall register its birth at the office of La Hotel de Ville; this law is equally obligatory on foreigners, and penalties are inflicted for neglect. Registers are also kept of all marriages and deaths, so that the government is enabled with tolerable precision to estimate at all times the population.

The Netherlands possess a most extensive line of sea coast on the northern boundaries, which might afford very valuable employ for numerous hands in the fisheries, many of which might be selected from the poor; for want of this fish is dear, especially at Brussels, except occasionally.

The ocean is an inexhaustible store of wealth, and amply repays human industry. Fish is a cheap and wholesome aliment, and contributes greatly to the comfort and support of an increasing population; the fisheries, therefore, should receive every possible protection in all well regulated states.

The day of the commencement of the shooting season varies here, notice is given thereof by an order from the governor or grand chamberlain of the province, it commenced September 8, 1817, and terminated March 15, 1818; it is regulated by laws passed April 30, 1790, and July 11, 1810. Permission from the proprietor of lands is requisite, previously to sporting, together with a licence from the mayor, which is somewhat difficult to obtain. Fines for trespassing are levied at discretion, from thirty



francs to two hundred, and guns are forfeited if carried by persons not possessing a license. Hunting is an amusement unknown here, and would not be permitted.

The inhabitants of Belgium, among many reasons which they have to congratulate themselves upon their emancipation from French despotism, have peculiar cause so to do, by being thereby freed from those oppressive laws of conscription, by which the French armies were recruited. During the few last years of Napoleon's authority, the prices of substitutes for the army arose to two and even three hundred Napoleons each person, besides a daily allowance; in one instance 10,000 francs was paid, the present price of a substitute being only from forty to sixty Napoleons each. To cement more strongly his authority and influence, he often interfered in a most arbitrary and oppressive manner, to compel the daughters of affluence to marry such of his officers as he thought proper, and as best served his own interests.

Besides the regular troops, among which are a few companies of Cuirassiers, accoutred partly from the spoils of Waterloo; there are militia regiments somewhat similar, in their organization, to those of Great Britain.

The following is, as accurate as I can obtain it, the state of the national land defence for 1816; but it must be observed, that several of the regiments are still incomplete.

|                                 |   |              |        |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|--------|
| 17 Battallions of the Line      | - | at 1000 each | 17,000 |
| 51 Bat. Militia                 | - | do.          | 51,000 |
| 16 Bat. Foreign Troops          | - | do.          | 16,000 |
| 11 Bat. destined for the Indies | - | do.          | 11,000 |
| 5 Artillery of the Line         | - | 800          | 4,000  |



|                                   |              |         |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| 3 Regiments of Cuirassiers        | at 1200 each | 3,600   |
| 1 Reg. Militia                    | do.          | 1,200   |
| 2 Reg. Dragoons                   | do.          | 2,400   |
| 3 Reg. Hussars                    | do.          | 3,600   |
| 1 Marechausse de Police           |              | 1,200   |
| 1 Regiment de Nassau              |              | 4,000   |
| 1 Bat. Infantry of the Line       |              | 1,200   |
| 1 Corps of Pioneers, Miners, etc. |              | 1,000   |
| 10 dit. of Garrison Troops        |              | 4,00    |
|                                   |              | -----   |
|                                   |              | 126,800 |

This number has been considerably reduced, but by the articles of the treaty, not less than 110,000 are to be kept up for the peace establishment of the Netherlands.

In the course of my investigations into the several subjects connected with the political economy of this country, I have observed much to condemn, and somewhat to admire. Petty larcenies are frequent, and may be attributed to that want of instruction in moral principles, which so extensively prevails. But great crimes are rare; for the three past years, only two public executions have taken place at Brussels, which were for murder.

The police is strictly regulated; his excellency Le Comte de Thiennes de Lombise is the minister of state charged with its superintendence; he gives daily audience. Patroles perambulate the streets nightly; the ancient title of Mayor of the City, is now changed to the Dutch appellation of Burgo Master. There are Juges de Pays in each section of the city, who settle small claims and disputes in a manner somewhat similar to justices of the peace and police magistrates in England.



Commissaries are also appointed to attend the markets, who occasionally regulate the prices, and appear to exercise, in particular emergencies, a summary jurisdiction in a way not practised in Britain.

During the late war, the police here was regulated upon the same principles as that of France. Spies were numerous and active, and the measures of government prompt. This system is still maintained, but not oppressively. The police is partly civil and partly military; each province has its chief magistrate, whose duties correspond with those who were named "Les Intendants." There are also military commandants, commissaries of police, and the usual subordinate officers for each of the provinces.

"A short time after the conquest of the Austrian Netherlands by the French, the new system of weights and measures, invented by the national institute of France, and adopted throughout that country, was introduced into the southern provinces of the present kingdom of the Netherlands. The inhabitants, attached to the customs of their ancestors, and habituated to the use of measures, familiar to them from their infancy, resisted for a time the innovation, but were at length obliged to comply; when by law it was enacted, that the new system of measures, weights and coins, was from that period to be used in every department or office of government." Thus far the use of the new system became general, throughout that part of the Continent, which was subject to the late Emperor of Gaul.

"A few years before the French revolution, the great inconvenience resulting from the numerous and various



weights and measures used in the different cities and provinces of France, induced the Royal Academy of Paris to take into consideration the means of establishing the use of similar methods, and denominations for the estimation of the length, surface or solidity both of solids and fluids throughout the kingdom.

“In order to discover the desired standard, or prototype, they had recourse to the globe, and two members were deputed to measure the arch of the terrestrial meridian, extending from Barcelona to Dunkirk. The ten millionth part of the one fourth of the meridian, was found to measure 3 feet, 11 lines, and 296 parts of the line, old paris lineal measure. This standard was denominated *Metre*.

“The mètre once adopted, its compounds and subdivisions were easily deduced. Here arose a new consideration, which reflects great credit on those who suggested it. In order to escape the tedious calculations of vulgar fractions, the decimal progression was selected.

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Dix! Millimètre | ,0001  |
| Mille Mètre     | ,001   |
| Centi mètre     | ,01    |
| Deci mètre      | ,1     |
| Mètre           | 1,     |
| Deca mètre      | 10,    |
| Hecto mètre     | 100,   |
| Kilo mètre      | 1000,  |
| Myria mètre     | 10000, |

“Such was the scale established of all the linear measures.



“ Secondly, from this linear standard or prototype, the measures of surface and solidity irradiate.

“ Two linear dimensions breadth and length, gave the mètre. The square mètre being too small for the mensuration of lands, a square was chosen, called *Are*, the side being ten mètres, containing 100 square mètres.

|            |            |        |
|------------|------------|--------|
| Dix milli  |            | ,0001  |
| Milli      |            | ,001   |
| Centi      | <i>Are</i> | ,01    |
| Deci       |            | ,1     |
| <i>Are</i> | .          | 1,     |
| Deca       |            | 10,    |
| Hecto      |            | 100,   |
| Kilo       | <i>Are</i> | 1000,  |
| Myrio      |            | 10000, |

“ Thirdly, three linear dimensions, length, breadth, and height, gave birth to the measures of capacity or volume. These measures required two standards, one for solids, the other for fluids. For solids, a small cube, the side one centi mètre, or a centi mètre cube of distilled water, at its maximum of density, about 38° and a half Fahrenheit, being weighed with the greatest possible accuracy, was found to contain 18 grains, 83 old Paris poids de Marc. This standard for solids received the denomination of Gramme, from which the following compounds and subdivisions were deduced.

|        |        |      |
|--------|--------|------|
| Milli  |        | ,001 |
| Centi  | Gramme | ,01  |
| Deci   |        | ,1   |
| Gramme | .      | 1,   |



|       |        |        |
|-------|--------|--------|
| Deca  | Gramme | 10,    |
| Hecto |        | 100,   |
| Kilo  |        | 1000,  |
| Myria |        | 10000, |

“Fourthly, the standard for liquids was the decimetre cube, a cube whose side was one decimetre, containing about 50,4 cubic inches old Paris measure. This adopted standard received the denomination of Litre, from which the following compounds and subdivisions were deduced.

|       |       |        |
|-------|-------|--------|
| Milli | Litre | ,001   |
| Centi |       | ,01    |
| Deci  |       | ,1     |
| Litre |       | 1,     |
| Deca  | Litre | 10,    |
| Hecto |       | 100,   |
| Kilo  |       | 1000,  |
| Myria |       | 10000, |

“These measures being little calculated to measure wood, the mètre cube or stere was adopted, the logs being one mètre long, and the frame to receive them, being one mètre wide, and one in height.

“To this system their coins and currency were adapted. The monetary unit or integer, being called a franc, a denomination which recalled to the minds of all Frenchmen, the remembrance of their ancestors. The franc weighs five grammes, and contains 0,9 pure silver, the subdivisions are the decime or tenth part of a franc, and the centime or hundredth part.”

This system is denominated the decimal system from it



decimal divisions; it is also named the metrical system, because founded on the mètre, (a measure equal to the one tenth millionth part of the meridian, or of the distance from pole to pole.) The terms used in it are five principal, and four to express increase and five to express decrease: the five principal are

Long and Square Measure Mètre

Land Measure . . . Are

Wood . . . Stere

Measure of Capacity . Litre

Weights . . . Gramme

Four express increase, viz.—

Deca which signifies Tenfold

Hecto do. do. One hundred fold.

Kilo do. do. One thousand fold.

Myria do. do. Ten thousand fold.

Three express decrease.

Deci . . . The tenth part

Centi . . . The hundredth part.

Milli . . . The thousandth part.

The names of the different weights and measures are formed by the union of the principal terms, with one of increase or decrease; thus,

Kilogramme is Kilo (1000 fold) and Gramme, and signifies 1000 Grammes.

To reduce the weights and measures of the several kingdoms of the world to one universal standard, is such an



herculean task, as will probably never be accomplished, it would indeed be highly desirable if attainable, as it would greatly facilitate commerce and promote equity; by a general consent of all nations and the combined efforts of men of science, this might yet be effected.

Accounts are kept, and reckonings made here in the decimal monies of France, in francs and centimes; and the French coins are equally current with those of Holland and Belgium.

The French gold and silver coins are as follows :

| GOLD.                                                                         | Weight.                     | Taken at Par.                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 20 Franc pieces called Napoleons; composed of fine Gold 9 parts—Alloy 1 part. | Grams. Centi. Gram.<br>6 45 | And passes here for about 16s. 6d. English money.                     |
| SILVER.                                                                       |                             |                                                                       |
| 5 Franc pieces, Silver 9 parts, Alloy 1 part.                                 | 25                          | Four of these, each at 55 Sous, are given in exchange for a Napoleon. |
| 1 Franc                                                                       | 5                           |                                                                       |
| Half Franc                                                                    | 2 50                        |                                                                       |
| COPPER.                                                                       |                             |                                                                       |
| 1 Sol, a piece of 5 centimes.                                                 | 10                          |                                                                       |

The following are the names of the several coins of Belgium, which have been furnished by a respectable friend, who has examined into the subject with much attention.



## FLEMISH GOLD COINS.

|                  |   |   |       |   |   | Fran. Cents. |
|------------------|---|---|-------|---|---|--------------|
| Double Souverain | . | . | value | . |   | 83 80        |
| Souverain        | . | . | .     | . | . | 16 00        |
| Ducats           | . | . | .     | . | . | 11 42        |

## FRENCH GOLD COINS,

## CURRENT IN FLANDERS.

|                   |   |   |   |   |   |       |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Double Louis d'Or | . | . | . | . |   | 47 20 |
| Louis d'Or        | . | . | . | . | . | 23 55 |
| Double Napoleon   | . | . | . | . | . | 40 00 |
| Napoleon          | . | . | . | . | . | 20 00 |

## FLEMISH SILVER COINS.

|                                              |   |   |   |   |  |      |
|----------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|------|
| Ducatoon                                     | . | . | . | . |  | 6 30 |
| Half Ducatoon                                | . | . | . | . |  | 3 15 |
| Quarter Do.                                  | . | . | . | . |  | 1 57 |
| Eighth Do.                                   | . | . | . | . |  | 0 75 |
| Crown                                        | . | . | . | . |  | 5 56 |
| Half Crown                                   | . | . | . | . |  | 2 77 |
| Quarter Do.                                  | . | . | . | . |  | 1 38 |
| Piece, formerly current for five Plaquettes, |   |   |   |   |  |      |
| now                                          | . | . | . | . |  | 1 50 |
| Double Escalin                               | . | . | . | . |  | 1 20 |
| Escalin                                      | . | . | . | . |  | 0 60 |
| Piece de 5 Sous de Brabant                   | . | . | . | . |  | 0 45 |
| Half of do. or piece of 10 liards            | . | . | . | . |  | 0 25 |
| Plaquette                                    | . | . | . | . |  | 0 30 |



The following coins were struck in the year 1790, but have never been in general circulation :

|                            |   |       | Fran. | Cents. |
|----------------------------|---|-------|-------|--------|
| Ducatoon                   | . | value | 6     | 30     |
| Florin, 20 Sous de Brabant | . |       | 1     | 81     |
| Half do. 10 do.            | . |       | 0     | 90     |

### FRENCH SILVER COINS,

#### CURRENT IN FLANDERS.

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Crown                 | . | . | . | . | 5 | 80 |
| Half do.              | . | . | . | . | 2 | 75 |
| Quarter do.           | . | . | . | . | 1 | 50 |
| Eighth do.            | . | . | . | . | 0 | 75 |
| Livre                 | . | . | . | . | 1 | 00 |
| Half do.              | . | . | . | . | 0 | 50 |
| Quarter do.           | . | . | . | . | 0 | 25 |
| Piece of 5 francs     | . | . | . | . | 5 | 00 |
| Piece of 2 francs     | . | . | . | . | 2 | 00 |
| Piece of 1 franc      | . | . | . | . | 1 | 00 |
| Piece of half a franc | . | . | . | . | 0 | 50 |
| Quarter francs        | . | . | . | . | 0 | 25 |

### MEASURE OF CAPACITY.

|                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10 Millilitre, 1 Centilitre, | 61028 Cubic Inches.      |
| 10 Centilitre, 1 Decilitre,  | 6.1028 do.               |
| 10 Decilitre, 1 Litre, . . . | 61.028 do. or 1 pint,    |
|                              | ,0115 Wine measure.      |
| 10 Litre, 1 Decalitre, . . . | 610.28 do. or 2 gallons. |
|                              | ,064 Wine measure.       |
| 10 Decalitre 1 Hectolitre    | 6102.8 do. or 10 gallons |
|                              | 26,4 Wine measure        |



The litre will contain 1 cubic decimetre of water, the measure being filled even with its rim.

The Winchester bushel being 2150,42 cubic inches, one hundred hectolitres will be equal to 35 quarters 3 bushels, 6 gallons, and 3 pints; and the quarter is about 2 hectolitres, 8 decalitres, and 2 litres.

### SUPERFICIAL, OR SQUARE MEASURE.

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 100 Square Millimetre, | 1 Square Centimetre. |
| 100 Square Centimetre, | 1 Square Decimetre.  |
| 100 Square Decimetre,  | 1 Square Metre.      |

### CUBIC MEASURE.

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1000 Cubic Centimetre, | 1 Cubic Decimetre, |
| 1000 Cubic Decimetre,  | 1 Cubic Metre.     |

In measuring wood the Cubic Metre is called a Stere; and the tenth part of a Stere is a Decistere.

The Decistere, in English measure, 3.53<sub>17</sub> cubic feet.

The Stere . . . . . 35.3<sub>17</sub> do.

|                |              |                                    |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 10 Millimetre, | 1 Centimetre |                                    |
| 10 Centimetre, | 1 Decimetre  |                                    |
| 10 Decimetre   | 1 Metre      | —39,37 <sub>1</sub> in. Eng. meas. |
| 10 Metre       | 1 Decametre  | —10 yds. 2 ft. 9 in.               |
| 10 Decametre,  | 1 Hectometre | —109 yds. 1 ft. 1 in.              |
| 10 Hectometre, | 1 Kilometre  | —4 fur. 213 yds. 1 foot.           |
| 10 Kilometre,  | 1 Myriametre | —6 mills. 1 fur. 156 ft.           |

The metre is equal to three feet 11,296, or nearly three feet 1 inch, old French measure; six feet four inches French, is six feet nine inches English measure. The



French foot is longer than the English by ,6579 or about six and a half per cent.

### LAND MEASURE.

|                                 |            |                                                                   |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 Square Metre,<br>or Centare. | 1 Deciare, |                                                                   |
| 10 Deciare,                     | 1 Are,     | Each 3 Eng. Perch.<br>and ,95 parts or 119<br>sq. yds. and ,6046. |
| 10 Are,                         | 1 Decare,  | Each 11.96 sq. yds.                                               |
| 10 Decare,                      | 1 Hectare  | Each 11.960 square<br>yards, or about 2<br>acres 1 rood.          |
| 10 Hectare,                     | 1 Kilare   |                                                                   |
| 10 Kilare,                      | 1 Myriare, |                                                                   |

The old Arpent of France is to the new measure as follows :

100 Arpents,—51 Hectares, 7 Ares, 20 centares.  
 An English Foot is equal to 304.7 Millimetre.  
 A Brabant do. . . . 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ .  
 1 Hectare and 20 Are . is 1 Bonnier ;  
 20 Brabant square feet is 1 Verge.  
 20 square Verges is 1 Bonnier.  
 43 Are 11 Centares and 92 Milliares is 1 English mile.

The following are the new French measures in weights,  
calculated on the decimal system :—

|                 |                  |                            |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 10 Milligramme, | 1 Centigramme—,  | 154 of a Grain Troy        |
| 10 Centig.      | 1 Decigramme --, | 1544 do. do.               |
| 10 Decig.       | 1 Gramme         | --15 grains, and 4440 do.  |
| 10 Gramme.      | 1 Decagramme     | 6 pwts. 10 grs. and 44 do. |
|                 |                  | or 5 drs. Avoirdupois      |
| 10 Decag.       | 1 Hectogramme,   | 3oz. 8 1-2 drs. Avoir.     |



|               |                                            |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 10 Hectag.    | 1 Kilogramme, 2lb. 3oz. 5drs. do.          |
| 10 Kilog.     | 1 Myriagramme, 22lb. 1oz. 15 do.           |
| 10 Myriog.    | 1 Quintal Metrique, 220lb. 10 oz. 1 dr.    |
| 10 Quin. Met. | 1 Millier Metrique, 1 ton, less 33 3-4 lb. |

The Gramme is equal in weight to a Cubic Centimetre of pure water; the Kilogramme to a Cubic Decimetre of pure water.

It is not unusual to sell goods by the Demi Kilogramme (1lb. 10oz. 10 1-2 drs. avoirdupoise,) a weight found very convenient because of its near approach to the old French pound.

Institutions for the relief of human suffering are the genuine fruits of Christianity; if they existed at all previously thereto, it was in a very limited degree; and whilst the humane mind views with satisfaction even the comparatively small number which are found in the Netherlands, a Briton, with an exultation—an almost justifiable pride, contemplates in his own country, the very numerous establishments for the relief of every species of misery to which humanity is liable. The benevolence of Britain, springing from a pure motive, environs her with a more impregnable fortress than the waves which surround her coasts, the wooden walls, her natural defence, or the bravery of her sons; whilst the latter have enabled her to resist the combined efforts of enemies leagued against her, the former has invoked the guardianship of Heaven, and has, in a most eminent degree, given to her fleets and armies victories which will be ranked by posterity with those of Greece and of Rome.

With satisfaction I record, that at the suggestion of



the Duke of Richmond, a British Charitable Fund has been long established at Brussels, for the relief of those of our countrymen whose misfortunes and deserving characters render them fit subjects for assistance. A weekly meeting of the Committee is held every Thursday, between the hours of twelve and two o'clock, at the house of Dr. Sayer, the Treasurer, Rue des douze Apôtres, to examine into the cases of those who apply, and to manage the concerns. The discretion and tempered liberality with which the funds are applied, entitles it to the aid of all those whose means may enable them to contribute to it.

The following is an abstract of the Report for 1818, of the Receipts and Disbursements of this valuable institution :—

**ABSTRACT of the REPORT of the BRITISH CHARITABLE FUND for 1818, established in Brussels.**

|                                                         | fr.   | c. |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|----|
| <i>Amount of Subscriptions, etc. for 1818</i> . . . . . | 3102  | 94 |
| <i>Received at Sacraments</i> . . . . .                 | 807   | 90 |
| <i>Balance in hand, Dec. 31, 1817</i> . . . . .         | 1166  | 28 |
|                                                         | <hr/> |    |
|                                                         | 5077  | 12 |
|                                                         | f.    | c. |
| <i>Distributed in Charity, during the</i>               |       |    |
| <i>year 1818</i> . . . . .                              | 2468  | 76 |
| <i>Medicines</i> . . . . .                              | 54    | 3  |
|                                                         | <hr/> |    |
|                                                         | 2522  | 99 |
|                                                         | <hr/> |    |
| <i>Balance in favour of the Fund</i> . . . . .          | 2554  | 13 |

*One hundred and forty-five persons, men, women and children, have been relieved, and the expenses of forty-five persons paid to England.*

**AUGUSTIN SAYER,**  
*Treasurer.*



*The following Gentlemen constitute the present Members of the Committee:---*

|                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>H. E. the Earl of Clancarty.</i> | <i>Col. G. Dyke.</i>         |
| <i>H. G. the Duke of Richmond.</i>  | <i>A. Sayer, M. D.</i>       |
| <i>The Hon. Col. Parker.</i>        | <i>J. Doratt, Esq.</i>       |
| <i>Sir Grenville Temple, Bart.</i>  | <i>W. H. Northey, Esq.</i>   |
| <i>Sir Richard Borough, Bart.</i>   | <i>Rev. G. Hornby, M. A.</i> |

*The following are new Members:*

|                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Sir George Goold, Bart.</i> | <i>T. Radcliff, Esq.</i> |
| <i>H. W. Aubrey, Esq.</i>      | <i>J. Hadfield, Esq.</i> |

*Brussels, 1819.*

Independently of their individual contributions, the several members of the committee, personally visit the claimants, when necessary; thus rescuing, in some measure, the British character from that obloquy which the misconduct of some individuals, have unfortunately brought upon it in this country.

It may be thought unnecessary to record instances of the liberality of His Grace the Duke of Richmond; his life has been marked by a series of generous and benevolent actions; those who best know him want no testimonial from me of the amiableness of his character; but the uniform patronage which I have experienced from him demands from me this public acknowledgement.

Honoured by the personal attendance of himself and several members of his illustrious house, on the several Courses of Lectures which I delivered in this city, I felt such patronage a most powerful stimulus to my exertions.

I considered myself addressing those who were placed by birth and education on the watch-towers of Britain, as



the guardians of her welfare, and who would hereafter be called upon to assist in the councils of their Sovereign, or in the senate of the nation.

The great kingdoms of antiquity passed under review : we traced Babylon, the mother of nations, to her fall—Nineveh, until her place was known no more—Tyre, until the palaces of her merchant princes became the tents of fishermen—Egypt until she was debased and enslaved. We followed the Israelites from their Exodus until the destruction of their temple and their subsequent dispersion. We contemplated polished Greece until her splendid cities became ruins—Carthage until Rome exulted over her, ; and Rome until abandoned to a similar fate.

The result of our enquiries established this maxim. *That national crimes have, throughout all ages, invoked national punishments ; and that Luxury, Vice, Idolatry, or Infidelity have been the powerful causes, which have hurled the great kingdoms of antiquity to destruction, scarcely leaving a memorial to point out where they stood.*

Should I have been, in any degree successful in sowing the seeds of truth and virtue, I shall rejoice that I have not lived in vain.



## LETTER XXV.

BRUSSELS.

I HAVE now to call your attention to a subject which has awakened a most lively interest in the sons and daughters of Britain, to the extremities of her widely extended realms—you will anticipate that I refer to the Battle of Waterloo of the 18th of June, 1815.

On the 15th June, 1815, at a very early hour in the morning, the French army attacked and defeated the Prussians, at Thuin, Lobbes, and Marchiennes au Pont, and at noon were masters of Charleroi and its environs. In the afternoon Marshal Blucher concentrated his forces and occupied the villages of St. Amand and Ligny, where, on the 16th, a dreadful contest took place, the effects of which are still visible in those villages. On the evening of the 15th the French Emperor attacked a brigade of the army under Prince de Weimar, at Frannes, and drove it back to the farm at Quatre Bras; this brigade was immediately reinforced by another division, and by break of day on the 16th, re-took part of the ground which had been lost, and maintained the communication between the allies.

Marshal Ney advanced on Quatre Bras, and was gallantly attacked there by the Prince of Orange; a most masterly retreat was effected by the allies, by which Marshal Ney was much deceived.



The Prussian army fought with great bravery, but the superiority of the French in numbers, and the Prussian cavalry not timely advancing occasioned them great losses, and the night after the battle of the 16th, Marshal Blucher retreated and concentrated his army at Wavre, which occasioned the allies to retreat the next morning, from Quatre Bras, through Genappe, to the plains of Waterloo, where, about four o'clock on the 17th, the British and Allied armies took up their position.

The field of Waterloo and its vicinities had been thrice the theatre of contest, previously to that great conflict, which may well claim to rank with the most sanguinary battles of antiquity : once during the wars of the Duke of Marlborough, early in the eighteenth century ; the second time in 1794, when a division of the combined armies leagued against France crossed the Sambre, attacked the French redoubt and took 500 prisoners. The French marched from Waterloo with 900 infantry and 100 cavalry, and obliged the allies to retire, but were, themselves, in turn, compelled to retreat.

Again, the French army of the north having crossed the Sambre and seized the town of Binehe, attacked General Kaunitz, on the 14th May, when they were repulsed with the loss of 5000 men, and several pieces of artillery ; Lieutenant-General Otto drove the French from Waterloo, and pushed forward to Turcoing. On the 18th the French attacked the posts of Turcoing, and at the same time a column of 5000 men advanced from Lisle, and another corps having forced General Otto's position near Waterloo, attacked the British in the rear.

The Hanoverians were charged with having been the



first to retreat, and the British troops suffered, in consequence thereof, considerable loss. The details of this campaign are peculiarly important, as deciding, at that period, the fate of the Netherlands.

It is impossible to retrace the events connected with the late battle of Waterloo, without experiencing feelings of the most lively interest. On the part of Napoleon, it was known throughout Europe that he had to play a hazardous game, for his last stake. Empire hung suspended upon his sword. He had well calculated the magnitude of the approaching warfare, and he hoped by the rapidity of his movements to vanquish the British forces, before they could form a junction with the numerous armies which were marching against him. By pushing on by the high roads towards Brussels, he was enabled to bring up his powerful train of artillery, by the help of which he trusted to have effected his purpose.

The Duke of Wellington awaited the motions of an antagonist whose military fame had exalted him to the rank of a hero. By some fatality information of the movements of the French army was first communicated to the Prussians, and by them to the Duke—making a difference of twelve hours in the time in which he ought to have received the intelligence; it reached him late in the evening of the 15th, June, whilst partaking the well-known hospitalities of the Duke of Richmond at Brussels. It informed him that the French troops had passed Charleroi, and were rapidly advancing; with that coolness, for which this great General is remarkable, and to which in some measure may be attributed his uninterrupted successes, he retired with the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Richmond into another room, and



opening a map, fixed his finger on the spot where the battle was afterwards fought, saying, "there we will give them the beating," observing at the same time, that on his road from Paris the preceding year as Ambassador, that situation appeared to him highly advantageous for the erection of a fortress for the defence of Brussels.

So much has been said and written on this subject, that although what remains can be but the gleanings, yet be it remembered, they are gleanings of the field of Waterloo. We have contemplated British bravery as it was displayed at Cressy, at Agincourt, and more recently under Marlborough with exultation and admiration. These sentiments have acquired additional interest from having been presented to our minds at that period of life when the feelings are most ardent, and the impressions most durable, but they become faint when compared with those which are excited by contemplating the field of Waterloo.

The Duke of Wellington having given the requisite orders for the dispositions of the troops, they were assembled in the Park by beat of drum, and marched out of Brussels after midnight of the 15th of June; the inhabitants were all in agitation, and cheered them at their departure; the city appeared illuminated throughout, and many a lovely form reclined in grief, and many a feeling heart burst forth in unfeigned complaints of woe and awful forebodings.

The Duke of Brunswick left the entertainment to join the army, immediately after the arrival of the news that the French were advancing, and early the next morning was killed in the action at Quatre Bras, where the first



brigade of foot guards, under the command of Major General Maitland, suffered very considerably.

The Duke of Richmond was with the Duke of Wellington a considerable part of the day, and two of his sons, the Earl of March and Lord G. Lennox, attended in their military capacities, displaying great activity and courage; and his nephew, Lord Apsley, was employed by the Duke of Wellington as Aide-de-Camp, he having volunteered his services. Another son of the Duke of Richmond was a spectator during a great part of the action.

The British troops and their allies occupied an extended line to the south of the wood of Soignies, ranging from the S. W. to the N. E. across the main roads to Charleroi and Nivelles, the French occupying the opposite heights at the distance of about 1200 yards. The reserve of the British army being advantageously posted at Braine-la-leude.

The right wing of the British line was commanded by Lord Hill, and was thrown back to avoid a ravine, which would have rendered it too much exposed, the Chateau de Gomont being occupied by the allied troops, the French in vain attempted to turn the wing of the army.

The centre was composed of the troops of the Prince of Orange, together with the Brunswick and Nassau regiments, and the guards, under General Cooke, on the right, and the divisions of General Alten on the left, protected also by the farm of the La Haye Sainte in the front; behind the left of the centre principally was posted the cavalry.



The left wing consisted of the regiments of Generals Picton and Kempt, and was admirably covered by the elevated ground of the ravine in front.

As if portentous of the awful events of the coming day, the previous night, although in the month of June, was clothed in thick darkness, the rain poured down in torrents, so that many of those who survived the dangers of the conflict, will through life feel the effects of bivouacking on the ground through this stormy night.

The French line was stationed to the right and left of La Belle Alliance; the left wing was commanded by Jerome Buonaparte, having the imperial guard for its reserve. Napoleon rejoiced at the opportunity of contending in arms and in military skill, with the Duke of Wellington, and feared only that the inferiority in numbers of the latter would induce him to retreat. "We have got these English at length" was the language of his exultation, when the dawn of the morning presented them to his view, preparing to receive him. The Duke of Wellington had communicated to Prince Blücher his expectation of being attacked on the following day; the latter had promised his aid in person, and it was proposed that if Napoleon should decline the combat, that the combined armies should, when united, become the assailants.

Le Chateau de Gomont was occupied by seven battalions, and four light companies of the Coldstream regiment. The wood and the orchard had been taken and retaken, but the Chateau proved impenetrable, the French had approached to the very doors, and at one point even into the garden; but they were met with such determined resistance that they were compelled to retreat. The farm



buildings became envelopped in flames, the dead and the dying were indiscriminately heaped on each other, and nought was heard but the perpetual discharge of the musquetry, the roar of the cannon, the cracklings of the fire and the groans of the wounded and the dying. Language is unequal to paint the dreadful scene. Previous to this contest the farm of Gomont was one of the most complete and best arranged of any in the country; its present ruined state displays in lively colours the desolating effects of war, and the ardour for which it was contended and disputed. Its importance to the British army must be apparent to every one who examines the field of action; nor is it advancing too much to say, the fate of the day greatly depended upon maintaining the possession of it.

When the battle commenced on the right on Gomont, about half past eleven in the morning, the Duke of Wellington took his first station within sight of the gate leading into the field, greatly exposed to the fire from the enemy's batteries. He ordered some cannon to be so placed as to enfilade their troops as they came up to the attack, which was most successfully effected, and great slaughter took place. He kept Gomont continually supplied by fresh troops to replace the killed and wounded; Marshal Ney had his horse shot under him whilst encouraging the French troops to this attack. About half past one o'clock, with a keenness of eye for which the Duke is remarkable, he said, "they have nearly done here;" on its being observed that fresh troops were marching on Gomont, with a thorough insight into the plans of his antagonist, he replied--"If he intended to keep up this attack, he would have despatched double that number;" and so it proved, for in order to conceal the main attack which Napoleon was about to make on the British centre, he commenced a



vigorous discharge of cannon, nearly along the whole of his line. Gomont had become a scene of dreadful carnage; three divisions of the French having in vain attempted to occupy it, or dislodge the British from that position.

Part of the farm and the wood indeed had been taken and retaken by the division of Jerome Napoleon; but the troops within the gardens and buildings defended themselves with such determined courage, as to be unconquerable. The conduct of the seven companies of the Coldstream regiment, who together with the four light companies of that division, did thus bravely defend this important post, entitles them to the highest praise, in which the first battalion of the second regiment of Nassau, in the service of the Netherlands, and some Brunswickers under Major de Bulow, claim a share.

It was now that Napoleon ordered an attack to be made on the centre of the British; but so admirably had the Duke of Wellington disposed his line, that no cavalry could penetrate his left wing, nor could the fire of any artillery take effect against it. The Duke now took his second station near the tree which bore his name, and which may be considered as about the centre of the allied army. Ponsonby's division had been successful in taking thirty pieces of cannon, but being surrounded by some of the French lancers of the 4th brigade, his horse could not extricate himself from the mire, and he fell on the field. Seeing his fate to be inevitable, he took out his watch and a picture to be delivered to his family, when the lancers came up. His body was found to the left of La Haye Sainte, pierced in seven different places; this brigade of lancers were themselves afterwards cut to pieces in the



course of the day. The French succeeded for a short time to beat back the British line, but were soon repulsed with the loss of two of their eagles. They repeated their attacks with most unexampled determination, with their cavalry, which in vain attempted to break the squares opposed to them. The division under Gen. Halket was charged eleven times by the Cuirassiers and Lancers; and one of the batteries from La Haye Sainte produced dreadful havoc among the British and Belgians. The 42d had been long annoyed by an attack from a body of the enemy, without being able from their low and disadvantageous position to act with success; when the Scotch Greys were ordered to charge and passed by them, feeling the fullest confidence in their countrymen, without waiting for command, they followed the cavalry to the charge; what the cavalry spared the bayonet destroyed, and the destruction became complete.

The gallant Sir Thomas Picton fell in one of those charges, which at various times during the day signalised the Scotch troops.

So terrible were the Scotch Greys to the enemy, that the French officers were often heard to admonish their men to stand firm against them. It is but justice to add, that the Scotch regiments displayed on this occasion such prodigies of valour, as even to invoke from Buonaparté himself commiseration at being compelled to oppose them; nor is it less an act of justice to state, That their good conduct before and after the battle, whilst quartered in the Netherlands, and in Brussels in particular, has left a memorial to their praise that will not speedily die away. To this hour the name of a Scotchman is synonymous to excellence, "*Ces sont les braves hommes,*" is in every



mouth. It may be considered as a practical comment on the system of national instruction in morality and piety which prevails in that country, that speaks louder and more efficaciously than volumes written in their praise. I am not a native of that country, I need not disown it if I were; but whenever we behold traces of true worth, it becomes the duty of the historian to record them.

The French succeeded in forcing the centre of the British line near La Haye Sainte, in consequence of the regiment which defended the farm-house having expended its ammunition, and its communication with any fresh supplies being cut off; an evil which might have been prevented by breaking down the wall on the right, which would have afforded the means of obtaining fresh supplies. The soldiers within the farm were almost all put to the sword.

So confident was Napoleon of his eventual success at this period, it is said, that he absolutely despatched an express to Paris to say, "That the day was won."

At a quarter past two the Duke of Richmond saw the first division of the Prussian troops, under General Van Bulow coming up, which subsequently engaged with the French troops near the wood on their right flank.

About three o'clock Napoleon took his second position near the main road, having made an excursion on his right to rally and advance his artillery.

Between five and six the desperate crisis began, Napoleon had ordered a colossal attack to be made by his grand body of reserve, consisting of upwards of 10,000 of his



best troops, with their powerful train of artillery. On marching into action they exhibited the most ardent enthusiasm, and cries of "Vive l'Empereur" rent the air; but the necessity of bringing them forward, is said to have tended much to dismay his other troops. The British officers were seen to be very active at this moment, animating the men, as well by approbation, as by example. When Wellington witnessed so much determined courage, taking out his watch about half past six, he observed, "we shall beat them yet."

Nothing could exceed the cool intrepidity, and the determined courage of the British troops; when formed into squares they became as impenetrable as the massive rock, and from time to time baffled every attempt of the enemy to break them. Several bold and desperate attacks were made to force the British centre, take possession of the village of St. Jean, and to possess themselves of the Duke of Wellington. Fearless of danger, he headed his troops in person—led them to the charge—threw himself into the squares, and by command and example, stimulated them to deeds of valour that will ever transcendently adorn the pages of British History.

Foiled on the right and in the centre, Napoleon attempted, by a bold and vigorous attack, to turn the left of the Allied Army, and cut off their retreat or prevent their junction with the Prussian forces. A very strong column of the French gained the height. It was then that the brave Sir Thomas Picton formed his division into a solid square and advanced; the French fired and fled; but the gallant Picton had received his death wound by a musket ball in his temple, and he expired without a struggle. He had been dangerously wounded, previously, on the 16th,



which he had concealed from all but his own servant and a particular friend.

Another powerful column of the French bore down on the 92d regiment which, from the losses it had sustained on the 16th and in the present attack, was reduced to little more than two hundred, who, like the brave Greeks at the pass of Thermophylæ, determined to sell their lives dearly. They charged the enemy and pierced the centre of their column; the Scotch Greys came to their assistance and cheering each other by the exclamation of "Scotland for ever," destroyed or took prisoners the whole column, 2000 in number. The Scotch Greys were reinforced by a regiment of heavy dragoons, and a most dreadful and sanguinary conflict took place between them and the French cuirassiers, and notwithstanding the advantages which the latter possessed, they were, after a long and terrible struggle, compelled to retreat, with great slaughter. The 49th and the 105th French regiments lost their eagles in this struggle.

The Lancers and the Cuirassiers rushed on with the most determined impetuosity upon the British troops, in the hopes to break the squares which were opposed to them. Where the battle raged the fiercest the Duke of Wellington was found the foremost; he invigorated his men with new courage to resist the enemy. The Foot Guards suffered severely, but their ranks proved impenetrable, and drove back the French with the loss of an immense number of troops.

The disinterested bravery of General de Lancy deserves to be handed down to posterity with the most honourable testimonials. He was animating a battalion of Hanoverian



troops, who were in some confusion to lead them to the charge, when he received a wound, which, perceiving to be mortal, he refused the assistance offered him to take him to the rear, desiring the soldiers not to waste time on him but to do their duty. He was found living on the following day on the field, but did not long survive, and left a widow to whom he had been recently married, to lament his loss. The recollection that his country honours his virtues and mingles its sorrows with hers, will be some mitigation to the deep sorrows of her heart.

Sir Alexander Gordon fell whilst expostulating with the Duke of Wellington on the danger of his situation. The Duke, in a letter to his brother, the Earl of Aberdeen, expressed himself deeply affected at his death, and more especially that it should take place whilst engaged in an act of anxious solicitude for him.

At 7 o'clock Napoleon took his third and last station, when he alighted from his horse and pointed several of the cannon himself. "Avancez" was his constant reply to every communication made to him. About 8 o'clock the second corps of Prussians, under Field Marshal Blücher came up; then it was that the combined army, which had hitherto acted on the defensive, received orders to advance. What language can describe the sensations which must then have animated every bosom. The invincible heroes had stood during the whole of the day like the solid and immoveable rock, which repels every roaring surge that rushes on its base: they had seen their brave companions fall by thousands at their side; they were engaged in their country's cause, and had no time to indulge in private feelings, but when orders were given to charge



and the trumpet of Victory sounded, ask every gallant heart who survived that day,—If he did not feel his bosom gound with joy, from a consciousness of having done his duty?

It was in vain that the Old Guard attempted to form and cover the defeat.

“Let us save the Eagles,” became the cry of the French, and Napoleon retreated, by his own report of the battle, in extreme confusion.

Among the errors committed by him on that day, (to him so disastrous,) was, his neglecting to possess himself of the wood on his right; his not sufficiently supporting his infantry by his cavalry: and, above all, his fatal self-confidence. During the action a Colonel of the French army was taken prisoner, who being brought to the Duke, offered to impart the plans of Napoleon, but he refused to listen to him.

The annals of war afford scarcely a similar instance of so desperate an engagement in so contracted a field of action. The French line extended about two miles in length; the Anglo-Allied Army about one mile and an half.

At the commencement of the action the lines were formed at about 1,200 feet distant from each other. The British were greatly deficient in heavy cavalry; their numbers are estimated at 10,000 cavalry and 53 thousand infantry. I am authorised by high authority to assert, that on the aggregate, not more than 50,000 were ever called



into action during the whole of the day. The numbers of the French were between 80 and 90,000, say about 85,000 of which 22,000 were cavalry; besides which they had 300 pieces of artillery.

The French accounts of this battle state most unequivocally, that, in case the allied army had been defeated, they must have been all cut to pieces. This is truly reckoning without their host; the Duke of Wellington had made such dispositions to protect his retreat, if necessary, as would fully have maintained his claim to the character of a great general.

During the whole of the day the Duke exhibited the most determined courage, and gave his orders with the greatest precision. He was exposed to much personal danger, for the enemy having discovered his station, directed their fire towards it, and a large proportion of his staff was killed or wounded around him.

He conversed during the action respecting the situation of the Russian forces, and observed he thought they would cross the Rhine that very day. He uniformly felt confident that he should maintain his position until the Prussians came up, which he estimated must be that evening or the next morning, and expressed his determination to bivouac on the ground that night.

After the action at Quatre Bras, and the retreat which evinced the consummate generalship of the Duke, he took a few hours sleep at a house on the road, which was occupied by Napoleon and his brother the succeeding evening.



When the British took possession of the farm and buildings of Gomont, previously to the commencement of the action, they had some difficulty in persuading the inhabitants to quit it; one man they suffered to remain, whom they armed. When the French attacked the troops stationed there under the command of General Cooke, this man was seen to fire upon the British from an upper window of the farm house, upon which they fired at him, and one of the bullets passed through each of his cheeks, the marks of which are still to be seen.

A British officer who has since the battle frequently visited the field, speaks highly of a peasant who lived near Mont St. Jean, who was with Blucher on bringing up his troops, and who is very communicative and intelligent.

It is worthy of remark, that on the day after the battle, a number of horses which were wounded, were seen herding together with sympathetic feelings.

Since that day which decided the fate of kingdoms, Britons have contemplated the plains of Waterloo with a degree of national pride, bordering upon enthusiasm; they have been resorted to by such numbers, that the visit may be considered as a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Valour; and although no national monument records the desperate contest, to hand down to posterity the names of the brave men who fell on that day; yet their memory has been embalmed by many a falling tear.

Near the celebrated "tree of Wellington" a pillar, on a pedestal of marble, is erected by a disconsolate sister and five surviving brothers, to the memory of Lieut.-Colonel



the Hon. Alexander Gordon, knt., who fell on the 18th of June, in the 29th year of his age.

In the church of Waterloo (where divine service was performed during the whole time of the battle,) are several monuments, inscribed as follows:

*Erected by his brother officers,*

“ This stone is in memory of

“ Lieutenant WM. LIVINGSTONE ROBE,

“ Of the British Royal Horse Artillery, son of Col. Sir  
Wm. Robe, K.C.B. and K.T.S.

“ He fell nobly at Waterloo, aged 24. This was the 33d time he had met his country's foe; among which were Fuentes de Ono, Salamanca, the Moselle, and the Nile, 1812 and 1813. He was known to and distinguished by Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington.

“ *Pious to his God,*

“ Beloved by his Friends and Soldiers, and devoted to his  
country.

“ His parents and family, whilst they glory in his country's triumphs, must ever deplore his loss.”

On another tablet to Serjeant-Major Quick, it is recorded that he was shot whilst holding the King's colours, in the act of bearing which, one Lieutenant and three Ensigns had successively fallen.

On another tablet is engraved:--



- “ Lieut.-Colonel Edward Stables.
- “ Lieut.-Col. Sir Francis D'Oyly, K.C.B.
- “ Lieut.-Col. Charles Thomas.
- “ Lieut.-Col. Wm. Miller.
- “ Lieut.-Col. Wm. Henry Mills.
- “ Capt. R. Adair.
- “ ——— Edw. Grose.
- “ ——— Newton Chambers.
- “ ——— Thomas Brown.
- “ Ensign Edward Pardoe.
- “ ——— James, Lord Hay.
- “ ——— Hon. S. S. P. Barrington.

“ *Of His Britannic Majesty's 1st Regiment of  
Foot Guards,*

“ Who fell gloriously in the battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo, the 16th and 18th of June, 1815.

“ The Officers of the regiment have erected this Monument in commemoration of the fall of their gallant companions.”

The Prussians have also erected, at Planchenoy, a pillar in cast iron, to the memory of their brave colleagues, who fell there on the 16th.

Some farther observations on this subject will engage your attention in my next.



## LETTER XXVI.

## BRUSSELS.

I AM authorised to assert that the interview which took place between the Duke of Wellington and Marshal Blücher, in the darkness of the night succeeding the battle, was near a small bridge called, Le Pont Genappe, near la maison du Roi, about a mile distant from La Belle-Alliance, and not at the latter place, as has been stated.

In grateful acknowledgment of the eminent services rendered to the kingdom of the Netherlands by the Duke, in addition to his former honors, he was created Prince of Waterloo, and lands near Quatre Bras and Nivelles, were assigned over to him, of an annual value of 2,000*l.* or thereabouts. He was also invested with the Grand Cross of the order of the William; and so sensible are the states of Europe of his merit, as well in the Council as in the Field, that he has been invested with seven Marshal's staffs—a circumstance unprecedented in martial records.

During the early period of the time, when the Duke of Richmond was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Wellington, then Honourable Arthur Wellesley, acted as his Secretary. He was with the Duke when offered the rank of Lieut-Colonel in the army; from that diffidence which is often found to accompany great abilities, he had actually written a letter to decline the promotion; if, hap-



pily for himself and for the military glory of his country, the Duke of Richmond had not judiciously persuaded him to burn the letter; which advice he complied with, and accepted the rank offered. It may be truly said of him, that he bears his "blushing honors thick upon him;" few individuals can boast of such accumulated splendid honors and titles, or who bears them with greater dignity and propriety.

The following statements of his several promotions cannot fail to be interesting:—

**Hon. Arthur Wellesley.**

|                |   |                   |   |                   |
|----------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| Ensign         | — | 73d foot          | — | 7th March, 1781.  |
| Lieutenant     | — | 76th              | — | 25th Dec.         |
| Ditto          | — | 41st              | — | 23d Jan. 1788.    |
| Ditto          | — | 12th dragoons,    |   | 25th June, 1789.  |
| Captain        | — | 58th foot         | — | 30th June, 1791.  |
| Major          | — | 33d (by purchase) |   | 30th April, 1792. |
| Lieut.-Colonel |   | 33d               | — | 30th Sept. 1793.  |
| Brevet Colonel |   | —                 | — | 3d of May, 1796.  |
| Major-General  |   | —                 | — | 29th April, 1802. |

Hon. Sir Arthur Wellesley, created K. B. in 1804.

|                |  |          |   |                   |
|----------------|--|----------|---|-------------------|
| Colonel        |  | 33d foot | — | 30th Jan. 1806.   |
| Lieut.-General |  | —        | — | 25th April, 1808. |

**Viscount Wellington.**

|                               |   |  |  |                  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|------------------|
| General in Spain and Portugal | — |  |  | 31st July, 1811. |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|------------------|

Earl and Marquis in 1812.

|                               |   |   |  |                   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------|
| Colonel of Royal Horse Guards |   |   |  | 1st of Jan. 1813. |
| Field Marshal                 | — | — |  | 21st June, 1813.  |

Duke and K. G. in 1814.

|                            |   |   |  |       |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|-------|
| Master General of Ordnance | — | — |  | 1817. |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|-------|



It would be a great injustice, whilst on this subject, to omit to notice the bravery and good conduct of his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange: throughout the whole of this eventful day, he was seen vigorously animating his troops, and foremost on every occasion of danger or of duty. He received his wound in the left shoulder in the evening, whilst gallantly charging the Imperial Guards, and narrowly escaped being taken prisoner.

As a just tribute to his valour, the King, his father, invested him with the Grand Cross of the Military Order of the William; and his grateful country have voted him the Domain of Tervueren in the Forest of Soigne, (where a new pavilion is to be built) and also the palace in the Rue de la Loi, on the north side of the Park.

Monsieur Odevaere, historical painter of Brussels, has chosen for the subject of a large picture, which has recently been exhibited in this city, that moment when the Prince had received his wound, and when his horse had received, also, a wound which proved mortal. Baron Constant de Villars is seen offering the Prince his horse, the Prince is supported by the Earl of March, eldest son of the Duke of Richmond, who was one of his aid-de-camps; the brave Francis Stiles is seen in the fore ground, bringing in one of the French eagles. The grouping is excellent, the colouring is rich and harmonious, the whole picture does great credit to the modern Flemish school of painting.

When the Prussians, on the 18th of June, followed up the victory by the pursuit, the travelling carriage of Napoleon was seized near Genappe; it was fitted up with infinite ingenuity, and contained every article of comfort and necessity. It was afterwards taken to London and pub-



lily exhibited, by which the possessor of it is said to have cleared many thousand pounds.

The dog, who during the attack of the Chateau de Gormont, kept near his master the whole of the time, in the summer of 1881, was living, and to be seen at Braine-la-leude.

It is stated also, that at the celebrated farm-house, at La Haye-Sainte, had lived for a great many years an old woman, who, during the whole of the battle on the 18th of June 1815, not only remained in the house, but was actually knitting as usual, totally insensible to what was passing, though exposed to the most imminent danger. On being remonstrated with on the impropriety of staying in the house, she replied: "It is nothing to me: I won't have any thing to do with either party, they may settle their quarrels, and fight it out among themselves."

During the preceding events the utmost consternation took place at Brussels; Hopes and Fears were felt alternately as the partisans of the two powers found their individual interests affected; for there were some, who strongly attached to the cause of the French, and anticipating that they would have been victorious, had prepared splendid entertainments for Napoleon that evening.

On the Friday, which was the day of the engagement at Quatre Bras, and on the whole of the Sunday, the day of the battle of Waterloo, the continued roar of cannon was not only distinctly heard at Brussels, but even at Antwerp. All was tumult and confusion; on the Saturday many of the wounded were brought in, and great preparations were making for the departure of the English. On the



Sunday the British inhabitants were removing out of Brussels in every direction; the Rue de Madelaine, one of the principal streets, exhibited one continuous unbroken chain of carriages: and such was the noise, tumult, and the hum of voices, that they were heard on the other side of the Park, near the courts of Justice, a distance of 1,800 feet. About nine this evening upwards of 2,000 prisoners were brought in.

Several waggons, with goods and passengers who were quitting Brussels, were so overladen as to break down; and such were the crowds of persons surrounding the canal, that one waggon (on the road which leads to Antwerp) with its horses was forced into it, and many persons were in danger of being drowned. Not a carriage of any sort could be obtained on the Sunday, every thing in the nature of a conveyance being in requisition. The wounded, both British and French, were brought in, in great numbers; but, in spite of the most active exertions, they had suffered greatly from lying on the ground in the rain and cold. By nine o'clock, on the Monday morning, the peasantry had stripped the whole of the dead who were lying naked in heaps. I learnt from a gentleman who visited the spot about that hour, that he only saw one English officer who had any clothes left on. The British suffered greatly from not receiving their supplies of food regularly. The waggons of provisions were pillaged on their way to the field.

The most ardent enthusiasm pervaded the ranks of the French; they fought with fury, and formed a striking contrast to the cool intrepidity of their opponents. "When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war." This was never more powerfully exemplified than on this event-



ful day, when, for the first time, Napoleon and Wellington, the Hannibal and Scipio of modern times, were opposed in arms; nor did the feelings cease to vibrate when the contest was over. The hospitals and the churches were filled with the wounded, but scarcely a groan was heard among the sufferers! an intense national feeling survived the moments of action: when one of the French had a ball extracted from his body, near his heart, he observed to the surgeon, "If you had cut a little deeper you would have found Napoleon." When another had his leg amputated, he threw it into the air and exclaimed, "Vive l'Empereur!"

As early as 4 o'clock, on the morning after the battle, the news of the victory was placarded in the streets of Brussels.

Posterity will review the great events which have agitated Europe for the last thirty years with a scrutinizing eye, and assign to them that station in the page of history which they claim. British bravery cannot be passed by, nor will the character of the Duke of Wellington, as a great military commander, be overlooked in the account. It is, indeed, much the fashion of a neighbouring nation to endeavour to depreciate his fame, and to accuse him of want of judgment in hazarding the battle of Waterloo. Without deep skill in military tactics, I may be permitted to contend the point. The Duke was fully aware of the importance of maintaining his station till the forces of the several allies, who were rushing forward to the contest had arrived; and the same policy which urged Napoleon to a separate conflict with each enemy, instigated the Duke to maintain his position, and to keep up the chain of communication with the Prussians until the arrival of the



Russian and other allies. A retreat must have been fatal to the cause. Divide and conquer had ever been the favourite maxim of the French emperor. It is only at such moments as these that great talents have an opportunity of displaying themselves. In common occurrences mankind approximate more to an equality. To resist a superior and veteran force with an inferior, required all the skill of a great general; 50,000 men, (not more of the allies were called into action) was a fearful odds against 90,000; amongst the 50,000 some too were disaffected. To counterbalance this disparity, the Duke judiciously availed himself of a position, which the more it becomes observed, the more it must be admired. The advanced post of Gomont on his right offered a fortress that proved invulnerable; he chose situations for his reserves that enabled him to secure them by natural advantages, and nevertheless to bring them into action without fatigue, by good roads; the centre of his army, protected by the farm of La Haye-Sainte, occupied the French troops near the whole of the day to contend against, at an immense waste of men and ammunition. The left wing of the allied forces was protected by a natural position, which even the immense artillery of the enemy could not assail. These were advantages which indicated great wisdom in the choice. The result proved the truth of these observations. Those who fell on that day, our praise cannot affect; they have passed to that bourne whence no traveller returns; to their surviving relatives, we have only to say, *Dulce et Decorum est pro patria mori.*

And whilst with exultation we thus record British bravery, let us not omit to acknowledge that the same virtue was magnanimously displayed in the ranks of the French. It will not derogate from British courage to be



sensible of worth in an enemy, on the contrary it heightens the character, to have triumphed over such a valiant foe.

To detail the numerous instances wherein the fine feelings of our nature were called into action, would occupy volumes; but I cannot resist narrating one which came to my own knowledge. The young wife of a British officer, possessing no common portion of loveliness, on the day after the battle hastened to the field, and sought among the dead for her husband, for whose fate she had reason to be alarmed; she had no other support than a few crusts of bread, which she had provided; she traversed the field of battle for three successive days: it was nearly a month before she found him, severely wounded in one of the hospitals.

On this occasion the humanity which was displayed by the inhabitants of the city of Brussels to the wounded and the sick, deserves to be noticed with the most distinguished marks of approbation. All ranks volunteered their services—lint, medicines, cordials, food, raiment, shelter, personal attendance were administered with the most liberal profusion, without fee or reward. Scarcely a house but had its bulletin at the door, to notice to the surgeons that it contained a certain number of the sick or of the wounded; rank forgot its elevation and admitted within its portals the suffering and the dying. Females were seen in every direction visiting the wounded and performing acts which have immortalized their characters.

The Belgium Newspapers of that period are filled with accounts of the great kindness and attention shewn by particular individuals to the sufferers. The Mayor of Brussels fixed upon some ladies in each parish, to go about



and collect linen, lint and other necessities. In the parish of St. Peter's they came to a house to solicit, in which the amiable mistress of it said to them, "Ladies, I cannot comply with your request, but learn the cause." She introduced them into a room filled with the wounded; another room on the first story was occupied in the same manner; these she attended, and assisted in dressing the wounds whilst her husband was aiding in preparing soups and food.

This is not to be viewed as a solitary instance; it is only one out of numerous similar acts of benevolence and humanity which then occurred.

The King issued an address containing most excellent instructions relative to the treatment of the wounded, and appointed a special commission for their relief. These are records which will redound to the honor of Brussels, when all her splendid monuments, her massy structures and her lofty spires have crumbled into dust and shall be forgotten.

But whilst we thus do justice to that valour, which, on the plains of Waterloo defeated an enemy, who would have rejoiced to have deluged the shores of Britain with blood; we cannot but observe with concern that, although the peaceful maxims of Christianity have been announced for upwards of 1800 years, empires, professedly Christian, urged by false notions of honour, or thirst of conquest, combine to destroy each other, with a malignity not surpassed by savage or pagan ferocity.

When Napoleon was borne impetuously along on the current of success, every eye looked up to him with asto-



nishment ; his elevation was contemplated as the aspirings of a lofty mind, gaining its native pre-eminence. But when the plains of Waterloo recorded his defeat in blood, and St. Helena re-echoed with his complaints, the Hero was found to be but Man. His errors became magnified into crimes ; his victories were overlooked or forgotten. How short-lived is human applause ? How like the ephemeron of the summer's day ?

“ He has left a name at which the world turn'd pale,

“ To point a moral, or adorn a tale.”

But whilst we trace effects from their secondary causes, let us never omit to look up to the Great—First Cause—who nerves the arm of the warrior and directs the mind of the leader in the day of battle.

What pages of past history proclaim more forcibly a Providence overruling all events. In Napoleon Buona-  
parte behold an humble unknown individual, starting from obscurity to conquest and a throne, and threatening with desolation all the established dynasties of Europe ; the very elements appeared to have joined him in alliance, and the combined talents of the greatest statesmen crouched before his loftier genius ;—for near twenty years, success—uninterrupted succes, attended all his plans, and victory sat upon his brow.

If there ever lived a man who reposed confidence in the strength of his own powers it was Napoleon—My arm and my sword have gotten me the victory, was the undeviating language of every action. Succeeding victories—uninterrupted successes appeared for a length of time to confirm the testimony and to record it in blood. Like



the sirroe of the desart he overwhelmed thousands on his way ; or like the avalanches of the Apenines, he hurled destruction in his fall,

But mark the instability of all human greatness--the decree from the Most High went forth--" hitherto shalt thou go and no further," and suddenly, conquest ceased to deck his aspiring plumes--Leipsic recorded his disgrace in blood--Moscow and Waterloo in fearful flame. Truly the finger of God was there.

The day of Waterloo is past over and gone. It is become the tale of other times ; but it has left an imperishable memorial. It is gone with the years beyond the flood, but it lives bright in recollection. The heroes who fell on that day have mouldered into dust, but the valour which inspired them is not departed--it holds its fixed residence in the hearts of Britons. The heroic deeds of that day have been sounded by the trump of Fame from the North to the South--from the East to the West of the habitable globe. Europe, Asia, Africa and America have re-echoed them ; and Beauty and Loveliness pay their annual visit to the endeared spot, and embalm the dust of the dead with the tears of sensibility, of virtue and of worth.

To the din of arms, the roar of cannon, the neighings of the proud war-horse and the conflict of contending hosts, has succeeded the soothing stillness of the rural scene, interrupted only by the wavings of the ripening corn, the hum of bees, or the reaper's song. The annunciations of the Harp of Prophecy have here been literally fulfilled--" the sword has been converted into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning-hook."







## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

*An Account of Napoleon's conduct, during and after the Battle of Waterloo, June 18, 1815; according to the depositions of Jean Baptiste De Coster, who was his guide on that day.*

**JEAN BAPTISTE DE COSTER**, aged 53 years, was born in the village of Corbeck Loo, near Louvain, and has been 33 years an inhabitant of Wallon. De Coster occupied, before the attacks of Napoleon, a small public-house, with two bonniers (about five acres) of land. On the approach of the French army, the 17th June, he retired with his family, composed of his wife and seven children, into the wood of the Abbaye d'Ayweirs, where he passed the night of Saturday, and Sunday. At six in the morning he went out of the wood to go to Church, and thence to the house of his brother, situated at Planchenois. He there found three French generals, who asked him if he had been long a resident there, and if he was well acquainted with the surrounding country. Upon his answering in the affirmative, one of them sent him to Napoleon, accompanied by a servant with a letter. Napoleon had passed the night in the farm of Caillon, and left it at six



o'clock. De Coster found him in a farm called Rossum, where he arrived at eight o'clock, and was afterwards presented to Bonaparte, who was standing in a range of about twenty feet long and sixteen wide, in the midst of a number of officers of his staff. Bonaparte asked him if he was well informed in the localities of the country, and if he would serve him as a guide. De Coster answering in a satisfactory manner, Napoleon said he should accompany him, adding, speak to me, my friend, with frankness, as if you were with your children.

The Rossum farm is situated near the Belle Alliance. The Emperor remained there till near noon. In the mean time, De Coster was kept in the farm yard by a soldier, who, whilst he was walking with him, informed him the strength of the army, and told him that 150,000 men were passing the frontiers, of which 40,000 were cavalry, amongst whom were 9,000 cuirassiers, 7,000 of the new guard, and from 8 to 9,000 of the old guard. This soldier praised the bravery of the English at Quatre Bras; he particularly admired the cool intrepidity of the Scotch mountaineers, who, he said, to use a military term, would not stir until they had given them the bayonet. Whilst De Coster was thus standing in the farm-yard, Bonaparte ordered him to be called at three different times, to request some information on the maps of the country, which he constantly consulted. He principally questioned him on the distance of several cities from Brabant to the field of battle, and made him relate which were the cities he had seen in his youth. De Coster named fourteen, which seemed to please Buonaparte. He likewise testified much satisfaction to learn that De Coster was a Flemming, and spoke the Flemish and Wallon languages. He then desired him to give him some particular information, told him



to answer to the things on which he might not be exactly informed by shrugging up his shoulders. He often repeated these instructions, adding, that if he succeeded, his reward should be a hundred times larger than he could expect; he likewise treated him with every mark of respect, saying, that without taking off his night-cap, which he wore, he should only salute him by putting up his hand in front. At noon Bonaparte went out with his staff, and placed himself on an eminence by the side of the bank, at a short distance in front of the farm, where he commanded the view of the field of battle. He was soon informed that the attack on the farm and chateau of Gomont, which commenced at eleven o'clock, had not been successful. At one o'clock the battle became general. Bonaparte remained in his first station with his staff, till five o'clock. He was on foot and walked constantly to and fro, sometimes his arms crossed, generally with his hands behind him, keeping his thumbs in the pockets of his riding-coat, which was a sort of slate colour. He kept his eyes fixed on the battle, and took out alternately his watch and his snuff-box. De Coster, who was on horseback near him, several times took notice of his watch. Bonaparte perceiving that he likewise took snuff, but that he had none, gave him several pinches. When he perceived that his attempts to carry the chateau of Gomont were in vain, he mounted his horse, left the Rossum farm at five o'clock, and hastened to place himself opposite the house of De Coster, within a gun-shot of the Belle Alliance. He remained in his second position seven hours. It was at this moment that he first perceived by the help of his glasses, the arrival of the Prussians. He informed his Aid-de-Camp, who having likewise made use of his glasses, saw them also; some moments after, an officer came to announce Bulow's approach. Bonaparte told him that he



knew it well. He commanded his guard to make a movement upon the centre of the British army. Then again, hastening in a gallop, he stationed himself, with his staff, in a hollow formed by the bank, half-way from the Belle Alliance, and the Haye-Sainte. This was his third and last position.

Bonaparte and his suite encountered great dangers to arrive at this hollow, a bullet went through the saddle of one of his officers, without touching either him or his horse. Bonaparte contented himself with coolly telling him that he must remain in the hollow.

There was a battery on each side of the road ; perceiving that one of the cannons of that on the left did not give a good fire, he dismounted, ascended the bank, and advancing towards the third piece, rectified it, whilst the bullets were hissing round him. He returned quietly with his hands in his pockets, and replaced himself in the midst of his officers. Whilst in this position he saw the eight battalions of the Old Guard, whom he had commanded to attack the centre of the English army, besieging La Haye-Sainte. Three of these battalions were destroyed before his eyes, crossing the bank, by the fire from the farm and batteries ; however, the French at length became masters of it, and the Hanoverians were obliged to surrender for want of arms. To sustain the Foot Guards Bonaparte brought forward his cavalry, composed of eight or nine regiments. He waited with the greatest anxiety the result of this charge ; he saw this chosen army lost in an instant in mounting the hill upon which is situated La Haye-Sainte. This was his last attack ; seeing his Old Guard destroyed, he lost all hope, and turning towards his officers, said, "It is finished now ; let us save ourselves." It was half-past



eight. Without taking any other steps or giving any more orders, and taking care to avoid the Prussians, Bonaparte, accompanied by his staff, galloped to Genappe, sometimes walking along the side of the bank only; passing before a battery of 14 pieces, which was near the observatory, he ordered 14 discharges from each piece before it should be abandoned. When he arrived at Genappe, it was half-past nine o'clock. The only street of this village was so encumbered with waggons and cannon, that it was a whole hour before he and the staff could cross it, passing through the houses which were no longer inhabited. However he had no other way, because the left was occupied by the Prussians, and there was no other bridge than that of Genappe to cross the river which passed through it. From Genappe he directed his course to Quartre Bras, still hastening on, fearing that the Prussians would overtake him. He was more easy when he had passed the last mentioned place, and soon arrived at Gosseligs, he dismounted and walked the rest of the way to Charleroi, which is nearly a league. He passed through Charleroi on horseback at about half past two, and went into a meadow called Murcenelle, on the other side of the town. There they made him a good fire, and brought him two bottles of wine, which he drank with his officers. He took no other refreshment. They spread on the grass a sack of oats for the horses, which they eat without being unharnessed. At a quarter before five, after having taken another guide, to whom they gave the horse De Coster had rode, he remounted, bowed to De Coster, and parted. Bertrand gave De Coster a Napoleon only as his recompense, and likewise disappeared, as well as all his staff, leaving De Coster alone, who was obliged to return home on foot. During the whole time that he was with Bonaparte, De Coster was well treated; once, when in their flight, they arrived



at Quatre Bras, one of the officers having observed that the other guide was escaping, took the precaution to tie the bridle of De Coster's horse to the saddle of his own. From the time of his retreat to his arrival in the meadow of Murcenelle, Bonaparte had neither stopped or spoken to any one. He had not taken any nourishment leaving Rossum Farm, and, as De Coster thinks, he had taken nothing since six o'clock in the morning; the dangers of the battle did not at all affect him. De Coster, whom fear had greatly agitated, frequently leant forward on his horse, to avoid the bullets which were passing around him. Bonaparte several times appeared displeased at this, telling him that these movements would make his officers think he had fallen, and that the best way to avoid the bullets would be by sitting upright during the battle. He often admired the bravery of the opposing army. He chiefly praised the Scotch Greys, expressing his regret at seeing them suffer so much, whilst they manœuvred so well, and handled the sabre so dexterously.

Till half-past five he had strong hopes, and often repeated that all was going on well; his generals likewise indulged this hope. In short, he manifested throughout the action the most intrepid coolness, without shewing any ill temper, and always speaking with great mildness to his officers. He was not at any time in danger of being taken, having had, even in the third station, when he was nearest the enemy, twelve pieces of cannon, and 3,000 Grenadier guards round him. He did not make use of the observatory built six weeks before the battle by the ingenious Hollanders. During his flight he frequently received news of the army, by officers who had escaped the pursuit of the allies.



De Coster's house having served as bivouacs for the French, the doors, windows, and all the wood work it contained, was burnt. The rent which he paid was 100 francs. De Coster now lives in the hamlet of Joli-Bois, on the road between Waterloo and Mont St. Jean. This account was written at Waterloo, July 8, 1816, from the answers of De Coster to the questions which were put to him. It was re-perused the next morning, and corrected under his observations.

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## No. II.

### *General Observations for the use of Travellers.*

It has been judiciously remarked, That the traveller should provide himself with sufficient money to defray his expenses; this recommendation is peculiarly applicable in Belgium.

But travellers will do well to avail themselves either of the exchange notes, or of letters of credit on the several principal cities of the Continent, which they mean to visit. These may be obtained on most liberal conditions of Messrs. Herries, Farquhar, and Co. Bankers, St. James street; or of Messrs. Morland, Ransom, and Co. Bankers, Pall Mall; the transferable and circular exchange notes are found particularly convenient; full particulars respecting them may be obtained at either of the above named banking houses in London.

“The usual charge for travelling post is one franc and an



half per horse for each post, equal to about five miles and an half. But if three persons travel in a cabriolet or post-chaise, an additional horse is charged. The fee to the post boy or postillion, is about one franc and a half each post. An hour is the usual time allowed for each post, and the postillions are not allowed to stop on the road, unless any accident has happened to the foremost. The post masters are not obliged to furnish horses for cross roads, but they will do it by special agreement. The postillions are forbidden from taking any more than is fixed by law, and are punishable for any unprovoked ill usage to passengers "

In the Diligencies of Flanders and Belgium, the places are numbered, and those who first come to the office and pay the fares, and enter their names in the book, have a right of choice for the whole journey; which, if insisted on, is always maintained; though strong efforts are often made to dispossess strangers or to change places.

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### No. III.

*Conveyances from Brussels by Voitures or Diligences, to the following principal places.*

Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Holland. Every morning at seven, and afternoon at four; from l'Hotel de la Couronne d'Espagne, Vieille Halle aux bled.

Another at six every morning, three in the afternoon, and nine at night, from l'Hotel de Brabant.

Another from the same place in summer, at five in the morning, and winter at six.



Another for Antwerp, at the Messagerie General, Rue de Madelaine, at six in the afternoon.

Another at four o'clock, a. m. from l'Hotel de l'Empereur.

And the barge starts every morning, precisely at eight in the morning for Antwerp, and at half past eight another barge for Malines, at the canal near le Pont du Rivage.

Bruges, Ostend, Courtrai, Lisle, Dunkirk, Arras, etc. Every morning at nine, from Rue de l'Hopital, Sect. 8. No. 449.

Ghent. Every afternoon at four, au Belier, Marché au Poulets, arrives timely to proceed by the Bruges barge.

Leige, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Hambourg, communicating with Germany, at the Messagerie General, at seven every evening.

Liege, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Rue de l'Hopital, Sect. 8. No. 449.

Lisle and Valenciennes, by way of Ghent, four every morning, and nine every evening. Rue de l'Hopital,

Louvain. At seven in the evening, Rue de l'Hopital, Sect. 8. No. 449.

Maestricht. At seven in the evening, from the same place.



Mons. At six every morning, at noon, and nine at night, from l'Hotel de l'Empereur, Rue des Escaliers. Another at noon, at Rosendael, Rue du Chene.

Namur. Every day at seven in the morning, from l'Hotel de l'Empereur.

Paris. By Valenciennes, etc. every day at four in the morning, arrives in 50 hours, Enterprize General des Messageries, Rue de la Madeleine.

Every day, at one in the afternoon, for Paris, by Ghent and Lisle, one day by Arras, and the other by Amiens, from the same place.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays only a night barge, at 10 o'clock, goes from Bruges to Ghent, and returns the next day about one o'clock to Bruges.

FINIS.



























Smithers, Henry

Observations made during a residence in Brussels and several tours through the Netherlands To which are added several original anecdotes relative to the battle of Waterloo, and the humane conduct of the inhabitants of the city of Brussels on that occasion

Brussels [ca. 1820]

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